

# Megillah

מגילה

مَگِيلَا

Year 38, Number 103

Published by the Mashadi Youth Committee

Tishrei 5784, October 2023

*Effy Hematian*

אפרים בן יהודה ז"ל

1943 - 2023



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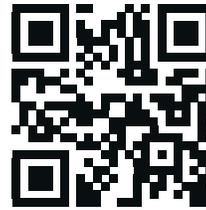
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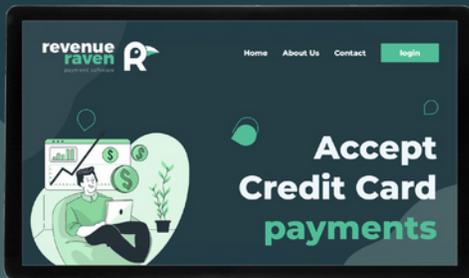
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The front cover of this issue of "Megillah" features a photograph of Mr. Effy Hematian z"l. This selection was made solely and unanimously by the Megillah Editorial Staff, as a special tribute to Mr. Hematian. Cover selection is at the sole discretion of the Megillah Editorial Staff, and there are no sponsorships or paid dedications available for either the front or rear covers. Any content requests regarding either cover, shall require unanimous consent of the entire Megillah Editorial Staff for approval.

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# Megillah

מגילה מגילת

is published by



Mashadi Youth Committee

کمیته جوانان مشهدی

ועד צעירי משהדי

a non-profit organization

affiliated with the

United Mashadi Jewish  
Community of America

and



Mashadi Publications Bureau

דפטר انتشارات جامعه مشهدی

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# Megillah Mourns the Loss of Mr. Fatollah 'Effy' Hematian ז"ל

## אפרים בן יהודה ז"ל

This issue of Megillah is dedicated in loving memory of Mr. Fatollah 'Effy' Hematian (Ephraim ben Yehuda z"l), of blessed memory.

Mr. Hematian (1943 - 2023) was a pillar of the Mashadi Jewish Community throughout the late 20th and early 21st centuries. His unwavering leadership, charisma, righteousness and generosity has touched thousands of lives and the Mashadi Jewish Community at-large. Mr. Hematian will be deeply missed, and remembered as 'A Giant of History' by our Community and the Jewish People. A special section commemorating the life Mr. Fatollah 'Effy' Hematian is included in this issue.

*The Editorial Staff of Megillah would like to extend our heartfelt condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Mr. Hematian, along with our gratitude for his lifelong commitment to community service and helping those in need.*

## *A Eulogy for my Father*

*Benny Hematian*

*Speech recited at the 'Haft' Memorial Service for Mr. Hematian at Shaare Shalom Synagogue.*

Leiluy Nishmat, our father, our Leader, our King, our everything, Ephraim Ben Yehuda, May his soul continue to elevate in Shamayim.

With the permission of my family, extended family & rabbanim, I would like to please take a few moments of your time to share some thoughts & memories of our dear father, Zichron Levracha, Fatollah Effy Hematian.

On behalf of our family, we would like to take the opportunity to thank the entire community, greater great neck community, family members, friends, colleagues, business associates, all from here and abroad from the bottom of our heart, for your continuous prayers, support, love, kind words & leaning shoulder these past 6 years and especially throughout these past few weeks. Our father was given a bonus from Hashem the Majority of the last 6 years and that was due to your constant outpour of Love and Prayers. I don't remember a day going by that someone wouldn't tell us, I am praying for your father, Ephraim ben Leah. People we have never met from all walks of life, from all faiths would tell us the same.

We are very lucky to be part of this beautiful community. We are truly blessed.



We also owe a debt of gratitude to Hashem for giving us this extra time to spend with our father and to be able to tell him how much we loved him, adored him and appreciated all that he had done for us, while also continuing to guide & teach us throughout our lives.

The outpour of kind words from everyone the last week has been mesmerizing, comforting and stunning. Words like, "your father was a legend, an amazing man, a visionary, a leader, a man of emunah, a bal chesed, a pillar of the community and industry, one of a kind.. etc.." Our family always knew he was special as he was our cornerstone and rock of the family, but to see such words from the entire community and from people that he never really had a direct connection with was incredible.

I went home every night and kept asking myself, how is it possible for one person to touch so many people. How is it possible for one man to accomplish so much in such a short time? I kept trying to look for the one common theme that touched everyone's hearts from young & old, rich or poor, community member or friend, employee or customer. I came to the conclusion that it is not possible to put one adjective to describe our father; it was his whole being that made that impact.

It was a combination of every word people used to describe him; such as,

A Mentch, A Man of Emunah, Fear of GOD, humility, wisdom, genuine, Gratitude, hard working, philanthropist, courage, a bal chesed, sense of responsibility, Loyal, Appreciative, visionary, honest, pure, compassionate, heart of gold, personable, Treated everyone with respect, artistic, creative, classy, epitome of a good person, Quiet Royalty and many more that we heard.

But if I could humbly help to summarize all of these adjectives in to one word that our father cherished and repeated over and over again to us in farsi was "ENSAN BASH", which the simple translation in English means to be a Good Human Being.

He lived this phrase his whole life. It wasn't something that just happened because of his sickness 6 years ago. It all started in Dargaz, a rural city in Iran at a young age of approx. 12-13 years old where he developed an unbreakable connection with God. It was one evening that he was sitting on the roof of his home and he looked up at the stars and said to himself, it is not possible for these stars and world around him to just be by accident or without someone behind it all. Pained by his family's financial situation and strife in the home because of it, he turned to God and made a plea. If you, Hashem, provide for me, I promise to provide for my father and mother & family till the last day of their lives. Deeply also bothered by his father's struggles seeking employment with the wealthy of that time, he also promised God to provide always for those in need and never turn an eye to someone's hardship or outcry for help.

Our father continued to tell us that from then on, he felt his whole life started to change. Hashem heard his pure prayers and call and in return showered him with wisdom, wealth and success from that moment till his last breath of his life, because he kept his end of the promise to Hashem.

He viewed wealth as a means to do good, to help someone in need. Never as the ultimate goal, because he knew that everything was from Hashem and never lost site of the end goal, which is to do the will of God. He never forgot where he came from. He even wrote an article one time in shalom magazine with a title, Dargaz To Kings Point, describing how he never forgot his roots and while never losing himself along the way.

In every customer meeting we sat in, the first words that came out of his mouth were "Its not because of my blue eyes and bald head that we have all of these customers & followers, but rather because "Someone up there likes me" & "God Bless America" and then continued with talking about how important it is to work hard, have passion and be a good honest person. He lived by the words, "as to harkat, as man Barkat", which means "You put forth your effort, and I will send the blessing".

He worked extremely hard, had an amazing passion for what he did and was the epitome of the American Dream but with the mindset that everything ultimately came from God.

I remember a personal story that when I had first graduated college and entered the business, I would question some of the employment decisions, thinking that I knew more with my college experience.

His response was something that I would never ever forget. He said to me, "DAS BA PEYKAR IN OFFICE NAZAN" and he continued " HAR ADAM IN JAH YEK MAZAL DAREH, TOH NEMEDOONEH MAZAL KEYEH" which meant in simple translation, First "DON'T TRY TO CHANGE THE BODY OF THIS OFFICE" & " Every person here brings there own mazal and you never know whose mazal it is".



I quickly learned that I knew nothing and still know nothing, and while college is important to be educated, it doesn't give you the fundamentals of understanding how this world operates. I soon learned what our father already knew, that everything of our business was a miracle and the hand of god till this very day. It is clear for our family that god is running our business, not our smartness or greatness. But rather because our office has a blessing & it's the mazal of all those that work with us. They are as our father always told us, Our INSURANCE POLICY.

Our father had a special level of Emunah and knew that everything in life that happened had to be the will of God. He lived it every day from childhood to the last seconds of his life, from Iran to America, through good times and difficulties. He believed in speaking to God directly with No intermediary needed. But what really put him to the test was when he was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer that had gone also to the liver 6 years ago. The life expectancy of such a diagnosis is generally 3-5 months, with some lucky individuals making it to one year, and a 1% chance of making it to 5 years. Our father however, was never the norm, and never could be part of regular statistics. He persevered against all odds and by always having a strong mind, will to live and will to continue doing good and for that Hashem gave him a bonus 6 years.

Never once throughout this time did he complain or question god or his faith. He was so thankful always for everything he had and knew that this too was good for him and something we could never understand. His level of courage, strength and emunah his whole life but especially during the last 6 years of health challenges, even when he was getting chemo or surgeries was incredible and something mindboggling. Even to the last week, whenever we asked him Dad, how do you feel? His response was Baruch Hashem, even though we knew he was in tremendous pain and anguish.

Our father always had a clear mind with a sense of purpose in this world. His biggest goal was to always provide first for his family and to make sure he can give them a better life then he had growing up. Second, he cherished his wife, children and most importantly his grandchildren and did everything to not only provide for them, set up the foundation for the future but most importantly to lead them in the correct path and to make sure they are spiritual, down to earth and good human beings.

I don't want to take your time to go through our father's whole life and legacy, because it will take hours, if not days to do him justice. But instead I want to take the last few moments to show a sense of gratitude, Hakarat Hatov & thank all of those people that helped our father along his journey of life, because we know that's what he would have said if he was here;

- 1) His late uncle, Dr Yosef Bassali, that took him into their home in Tehran while he attended ORT College for his degree in electronic engineering.
- 2) Dayee Davood & Shaen Bassali who helped set up our parents for Marriage.
- 3) Mr & Mrs Albert & Lily Rahmanan who allowed our parents to live in their house when they first arrived from Iran until they were able to settle in.
- 4) Mr David Bassalali for his helping hand at his most vulnerable stage in life when our father arrived in America without knowing where his livelihood would come from. Mr David offered a partnership and with the most important three words that gave our father the confidence to take the risk, which was "loss on me". And with those words brought approx. 35 years of partnership and mutual respect for each other. Our gratitude is also to his wife lina Khanom and his children, Ava, Arun, Adam for their help, friendship, support and mutual respect throughout all the years till today.

5) Rabbi Shoub for offering him the opportunity to name Shaare Rachamim and the zechut and happiness it brought our father and family.

6) And more recently the Levian Family for allowing us to partner on the naming of Magen Ephraim Sephardic Academy, the new community elementary school.

and many many more along the way that have assisted and helped our father that I am sure we have forgotten to mention.

And the last 6 years of health challenges, he had a new wave of helpers and messengers from Hashem that assisted him that also need to be thanked;

1) His oncologists Dr Bruckner and Dr Hirsfield.

2) His surgeons, Dr Schwartz and Dr Cerfolio

3) Dr Robert Rahmani for being by his side every & any second of the day.

4) Dr Jeremy Nikfarjam when he had wound pain most recently.

5) Our Cousins, Dr Farhad Bassali & Mehran Bassali.

6) All the Nurses and Aids.

7) All our colleagues in the office that helped care for him day in and day out while he would come to the office.

8) Mr. Bassalian who blessed us by joining our office 6 years ago and became the spiritual sustenance and guidance for him every day.

9) And most importantly, we need to thank all of his Brothers, Cousins, Friends, Chosovands & entire family & Extended EFFY Family around him for always giving him & our family the support system that we needed to get through the challenge and test.

Lastly, I want to personally take the opportunity to thank our immediate family for all they did especially these past 6 years to help our father through the health challenges;

### ***My Brothers Bobby & Brian***

1) Whom I am jealous of their Kibud Av and I want to ask for Mechila for not doing enough to help them.

2) They Divided Driving him back & forth to chemo and work for the past 6 years and attended every chemo session and every dr visit.

3) And then in the past 4 months especially when it got tougher, my brothers would every night together take him up the stairs in a wheel chair and would pick him up and put him into bed together with my mother.

4) Fixing and doing everything needed for the house and to make him comfortable

5) Besides the 100's of other things they would do to make him feel comfortable.

### ***My dear sister, Bitta***

1) Our fathers Favorite Daughter as he would always say to her.

2) She was the life of the party and was showering him with love and emunah the past 6 years every single day.

3) She was the one that always made sure he would eat and be happy.

4) She was the one to always order and return his amazon packages..

5) She was the one that would come to visit him every morning to wish him a Good morning and every evening to wish him a good night

### ***The Arooses- our Dear Melanie and Caroline***

1) For always showing him so much respect, love, warmth, and heart felt encouragement

2) For allowing their husbands to take away from their time and instead spend time with their father and family.

### ***Our Agzama Ryan***

1) Who is arguably his most favorite son and a brother to us all

2) Ryan was the most amazing son in law anyone could ask for, by being so kind, respectful, humble, smart, and his whole being.

3) He was our fathers cain whenever he needed it, inside and outside the office

***And lastly to our dear Mother, Malka Hematian, our queen, our rock.***

The Truth is, it is our mother that kept our father alive all of these past 6 years.

She has been by his side through every anguish and pain and never for one second left his side

She went to every chemo, every dr visit, every emotion, every worry, every up and down not only during these past 6 years, but throughout the past approx. 45 years of marriage.

But especially these past 4 months, our mother was not only a wife, companion and best friend, but now also a NURSE, AID, and support team for our father.

Mom, we can't thank you enough for everything you have done for Dad throughout all the years, but especially these past 6 years. We know how difficult it was and you never once let us see you tired or in pain. You always were optimistic, with true emunah, even though you have been through so much in your own personal life.

We love you so much, we admire you, we look up to you, you are our rock, and our source of Bracha and most importantly our QUEEN forever.

Lastly, I want to end by as a Family asking Mechila from our dear father for not doing enough for you and for not thanking you enough for all you have done for us. You have always provided us for every need of our life. You always gave us the ability to make our own mistakes and the freedom to explore. You have given us the ability to hold our head high up with the great name you have created. Your legacy will live on forever Be"eh. We will miss your shining face, Bold blue eyes and your contagious smile.

***You were and will continue to be our Father, Our King, our leader, our Everything!***

### ***A Note from the Editor:***

*As this article is the transcript of a speech, slight adjustments have been made to properly format it for print in "Megillah". All verses and words recited in Farsi have been transliterated into Latin letters for the convenience of our primarily English reading audience.*

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# *A Eulogy for my Father*

*Bobby Hematian*

*Speech recited at the 'Shloshim/Seeh' Memorial Service for Mr. Hematian at Shaare Shalom Synagogue.*

Thank you everyone for gathering here tonight to honor the life and legacy of a truly remarkable man, Effy Hematian.

Over the past month, I have heard from so many of you about the impact that our father had on your life. Tonight, I'd like to start by thanking each of YOU for the profound impact that YOU made on HIS life, and in turn, the life of our entire family.

When our father received his cancer diagnosis six years ago, the outpouring of support was unlike anything we had ever seen before. We would constantly be approached by people, some we didn't know, who would share with us that they were praying for his recovery. I know without a doubt that all your prayers gifted us six more cherished years with him, and gave him a reason to fight as hard as he did.

He loved every single one of you here, and wanted to continue living because of you. He would always tell us how lucky he was to see, with his own eyes, what people thought of him. Typically, it's only after someone passes that you hear about how special and amazing of a person the deceased was, but in our father's case he, and all of us, got to witness it while he was still alive.

But what made him so special? I could stand here for days or weeks, sharing stories about him, and that still wouldn't capture it all.

While it feels near-impossible to narrow down exactly which traits made him who he was, tonight I'd like to share a few stories about some of the qualities that I admired most about him: **His love for Hashem, his strength and classiness and his humility and kindness.**

## **Quality 1 – His Love for Hashem**

Our father was our family's greatest mentor and educator, not just in business, but as a dad, husband and friend. One of his favorite sayings was "khoda bozrgeh". Every time something we thought was bad for business or in life happened, he would always respond, "khoda bozrgeh". These words are just words for most people, but I know he believed it with all of his heart. When he was diagnosed with cancer, 'khoda bozrgeh' was put to the test. And he passed with flying colors. Not once did he question G-d. Not once did he doubt G-d, or get upset with G-d. All along he said, 'khoda bozrgeh'. His faith was unshakable. While his illness caused many of us to question G-d and feel emotions of anger and sadness, our father's faith and love for G-d only grew and strengthened. Even during his darkest days, he became the person that was giving us hope that everything would be okay. He was assuring us that Hashem has a plan, and he would never show signs of fear or distrust. He was the person we looked to when we were down and scared, even though he had so many reasons to be scared himself.

## **Quality 2 - Strength and Classiness**

Our father has always been the strongest and classiest man we knew, but over the past six years, the strength and class he demonstrated was awe inspiring. There were times he would be so weak and tired after his treatments, that we would ask him to please allow us to take him home and rest. He would respond with such power and strength, "if you want to kill me, take me home. If you want me to live, take me to the office because THAT is my palace and where I feel my greatest". Even though he could barely walk some weeks, he continued to demonstrate unwavering strength and dedication by not allowing anything to stop him from doing what he loved and was so passionate about. AND, he did it with such class. He would wake up every morning, no matter where he had to go, and put on his suit and tie along with his panther pin on his lapel, because he wouldn't let this diagnosis change who he was in any way.

## **Quality 3 - Humility and Kindness**

Despite all his accomplishments, it was his humility and kindness that truly set him apart. His heart was filled with an infinite capacity to love and care for others. His genuine concern for the well-being and happiness of those around him was boundless. He touched the lives of countless individuals, probably a lot more than we will ever know.

Our father didn't just believe in DOING nice things for others, but BEING nice to others was equally as important. He would make sure to greet and listen to everyone, anywhere he went – whether on the train, in the office, at kanissa, and even at his treatment center.

He saw no difference in people because of their wealth, and, he for sure did not change because of this. He always stayed the same Effy that he was as a kid in Dargaz.

When he got sick, we tried our best to be by his side every step of the way – whether it was driving him to work, or attending a doctor visit, or just stopping by the house, to be with him.

This man, who should have been insisting we help him, would instead apologize to us every time for "inconveniencing us." But what he didn't know is that it was actually the honor and privilege of OUR lifetimes to be there next to him. What we wish we had told him is that we loved and cherished every second of the time we spent with him and the lessons we would learn on the journey with him were priceless and will remain with us forever.

Whether he was playing basketball with his grandchildren, singing and dancing with his friends, or sharing his prayers from a hospital bed, our father always carried himself with regal grace, radiating strength and resilience that inspired those around him. Though he may no longer be physically present among us, his essence will forever live on in our hearts and minds. We will together continue his legacy of kindness, intelligence, and strength in the face of adversity, honoring him by living our lives with the same passion, love and unwavering determination that he exemplified.

In so many ways, and to so many of us here, our dad embodied the characteristics of a modern-day king. But, he wasn't alone, he had his queen by his side.

Our mom, Anita, is the main reason he was who he was. Not a day would go by that our father wouldn't give all the credit for his success and his blessings from Hashem, all to her. Even in his toughest times, she was by his side. Just a few months ago he told us that our mom was like a "fereshteh" taking the best care of him. She was his rock, his queen, his biggest supporter. They have been through it all together and raised our beautiful family together. All the great things we heard about our father, without our mom by his side, would not have been possible.

Mom, the man that we all loved and cherished as our king, was in so many ways because of you. Thank you and we love you.

Dad, you not only told us with your words, but you taught us with your actions of humility that material things don't have real value. You would always tell us that you can't take any of the material things with you when you pass away, instead you should focus on important values in life, like helping others and having a good name. Because, like you said, "a good name will live on forever."

I am so proud and honored to say, you have accomplished leaving this world with the greatest name.

TOV SHEM MI SHEMEN TOV



## *Effy Hematian z"l, An Angel Among Us*

*Ryan Liviem*

*Speech recited at the 'Shloshim/Seeh' Memorial Service for Mr. Hematian at Shaare Shalom Synagogue.*

My beloved father-in-law, Effy Hematian Z"L, possessed character traits that are not often found among most individuals. My hope is that by sharing some stories and insights about him, all of us can carry forth inspiration to instill some of those traits in ourselves, and in doing so, we will have honored him and his legacy in the best way possible.

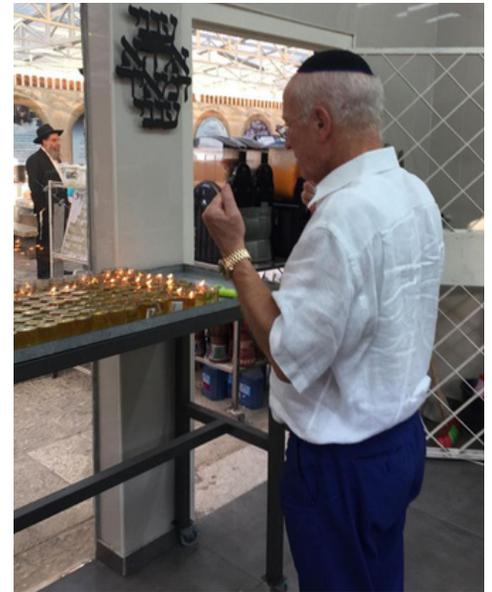
When I first got engaged to my wife Bitta, I was in Kanissa one Shabbat and was pulled to the side by the late Firooz Hakimian Z"L; he asked me if I knew who my father-in-law was. My response was that I'd heard amazing things about him. He said that he needed to tell me a story to help me understand who this man was. He proceeded to tell me about a man from the community who had come to Effy Khan many years ago, when he was first trying to establish himself in business. He showed Effy Khan a gemstone parcel with many carats of precious gems in it. After a few minutes of reviewing the parcel with his keen eye, Effy Khan took a look at the memo and remarked that his price was incorrect. Knowing that he did not have much room for profit, the man became startled. He, however, wanted to do business with Effy Khan, and so he responded that he would accept whichever price Mr. Effy suggested. Effy Khan proceeded to cross out the number on the memo, write a new number, and return it to him. The gentleman was astonished upon looking at the memo; Effy Khan had increased the price per carat, taking the value of the memo up several thousand dollars. Upon hearing this story, I was astounded. I

wondered how many people in this world would give their own wealth, which they toiled for with tremendous effort, to someone else just to help build up another person. This otherworldly generosity stemmed from a deeply rooted emunah in Hashem. My father-in-law did not view his wealth as the goal but rather the means to achieve his goal, which was to help as many people as he could and to help build the lives and restore the dignity of those in need.

It is said that Hashem asked Shlomo HaMelech for one thing he wanted in this world. Rather than ask for wealth, success, or fame, Shlomo asked for wisdom. Utterly pleased with Shlomo's humble request, Hashem blessed Shlomo with everything. He made him the wisest man that ever lived, but he also blessed him with boundless wealth, success, and honor. When my father-in-law was a little boy in Dargaz, he had a humble request of Hashem. He asked that Hashem bless him with the means to provide for his family. Knowing what was in his pure heart, Hashem granted Effy Khan's request and blessed him to not only provide for his family but for many more.

There is a phrase in Chapter 91 of Tehillim, also known as 'Yoshev Beseter'. In the 15th Passuk of this Perek, it says "IMO ANOCHI BETZARAH", which means, "I am with him in his struggle". The literal translation of this refers to Hashem and how He is with us in our struggles. It is also a lesson for us, teaching us that when our brothers or sisters are amidst a struggle, we need to be

with them. We need to take their burden upon ourselves and feel the pain together with them, enabling them to find the strength to push forward. Effy Khan lived by this phrase. He never turned his back on those who needed his help, and time and time again, he joined in the burden of his fellow.



In 2008, when the economy took a turn for the worse, Effy Khan and his family made the decision to reduce the work week rather than lay off any employees, but he then took things a step further. He downgraded his own car to a lower brand, not because he had to but because he wanted to. He would rather live a bit more modestly so that a few more people can put food on their families' tables.

When we were in the office, Effy Khan would teach us on a daily basis. He was a perfectionist and a true visionary. He also cared tremendously for all those around him to follow suit, and he transmitted his passion to all who came across him. He taught us all tremendous lessons and values; among those lessons, he showed us that the only way to lead is by example and preached that respect is earned, not forced. When he wanted something done, he would do it himself with the utmost care, precision, and attention to detail. But above all, he carried his unwavering faith with him at every turn. There is a saying that we can only do our best and let Hashem do the rest. Effy Khan embodied this motto. He gave everything his absolute all but never lost sight of the fact that success ultimately came from Hashem.

He carried this faith into his battle with his illness once again. Beating the odds time and time again by raising his eyes above the doctors and the numbers and asking his Father in heaven to heal and strengthen him. He was an inspiration in every way. Often times in the office, I would walk into his room with petty worries and anxieties on my mind, seeking his advice and blessing. Most times, I would walk out embarrassed. Here was my father-in-law, sitting at his desk with his chemotherapy belt attached to him and a smile on his face, carrying out his responsibilities. Simply being around him demanded of everyone that they be the very best version of themselves.

There is a powerful saying: "In life, we must all choose between two pains: the pain of discipline or the pain of regret". Effy Khan always chose the pain of discipline, without fail. If he was on a red-eye flight, he was the first one back in the office that morning. When he would do chemo, he would go straight to the office and continue to work. When he was first diagnosed with his life-altering illness six years ago, he sought not only the advice of the doctors but also that of the Rabbi. When they made certain suggestions to him, he did not think twice. He immediately accepted upon himself the mitzvot of Shabbat, Tzitzit, and Kashrut, among others. He never looked back. From that day forward, it was the decision he made, and like so many other times in his life, he stuck to it. Perhaps this was a catalyst that helped him merit six more years of life from Hashem.

Beyond the brilliant businessman and his heart of pure gold, Effy Khan was a phenomenal husband, father, father-in-law, and grandfather. He always put Anita Khanoom on a pedestal and treated her like a true queen. When it came to his children, he was always there to answer every question with a sense of wisdom and conviction. He also strove, together with Anita Khanoom, to instill the most noble traits and values in his children. When it came to me, he truly treated me like a son and made me feel so loved.

With all the grandchildren, he was so beloved. His face would beam with joy when any of them would walk in the room. On Friday nights, he would sit for hours with the kids and build Magna tile towers, showering them with praise when they would produce innovative architecture, making it the absolute highlight of their week. He loved his family so much, and we all loved him even more. Bitta would often jokingly tell me that she loved her father more than me, and she still does, if I may add. My response always was, You have every reason to! Effy Khan was not a normal human being, and all of us had a chance to live in a generation when his soul was present in this world. He was an angel among us.

*My hope and prayer is that Effy Khan and his legacy continue to live on through not only the entire family but also the entire community. May the lessons he has left behind continue to serve as a guiding light for the community for generations to come, to always strive for truth and to seek out that which G-d wants from all of us, to be the very best version of ourselves, always.*



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## Mashadi Wedding Album

*An Update from the Wedding Album Editorial Staff*

To date, roughly 400 couples have completed the submission form to be included in the upcoming Mashadi Wedding Album. We thank all couples who completed the form, and made this project possible.

The Wedding Album Editorial Staff, with the help of the MYC, is currently in the process of formatting the Album, and with the help of HaShem, aim to publish and have Albums available for community members to purchase by Chanukah.

If you are eligible to be included (married between 2002 - Present), and have not yet filled out the submission form, this is your *absolute last chance to do so*. Submissions will close on November 1, 2023. Those who do not submit will be omitted.



Scan to Access Submission Form

For more information, contact Hanna Mordechai:  
**Hanna@MashadiYouth.org**

# *Interview with One of Our Community's Unique Personalities*

*Fatollah Hematian z"l, Honey Ebrani, Shalom Magazine Editorial Staff*

*This interview was conducted by Mrs. Honey Ebrani 14 years ago for Shalom Magazine and is re-printed here exactly as it first appeared in 2009.*

**Introduction:** This article is a translation of an interview conducted with Mr. Effy (Fatollah) Hematian, whom most of our readers probably know quite well. Many articles have been published about him, including a book by Dr. Kohanim on "Successful Jewish Businessmen of the Pahlavi Era." However, hearing Mr. Hematian in his own words is a different experience. Therefore, "Shalom" editors decided to reject the usual style of questions and answers and print Effy's remarks in a continuous and uninterrupted format. Effy lives in a beautiful waterfront mansion in Kings Point. The panorama of New York City is visible beyond the water from behind the vast windows and silk drapes. Any artist would probably love to gaze at this view so as to etch it into his memory.

Many thanks to G-d of heavens, Who made it possible for me - His humble servant to host the "Shalom" editors in this setting. I wish to thank "Shalom" for selecting me for this interview. I must warn you though that I speak in a blunt and direct manner and refrain from ambiguity and double talk, so that hopefully my message will be clear and complete.

It is a privilege to be a member of this great community, and it is equally a great responsibility to try and protect this community in the face of the great dangers in our society and to pass it on to future generations even healthier, stronger, and more vibrant.

I was ten-years-old and living in "Dar-e-Gaz", a small town near the Russian border. My family lived under harsh financial conditions, and our better-off relatives could not help us either. Only my dear uncle, Dr. Bassali extended his fatherly love and unreserved support to us, and I shall be thankful to him as long as I live. I wish him and his family all of G-d's blessings. I shall follow all his wishes to the best of my ability.

The Iranian society at the time was tainted by extreme class differences. Unfair distribution of wealth has always bothered me deeply. As a consequence, I pledged to rise above class differences and to treat all people with no prejudice and no regard to their financial status.

I loved evenings, because during those hours of calm and tranquility, I would get a chance to open my heart to G-d and communicate my childish dreams, plans and aspirations. I do believe that all of mankind can speak to G-d directly, with no need of intermediaries. Only one needs purity of the mind and a sacred intent in order to do so.

I have always asked G-d to make me the tool to provide better living conditions for my parents. This has always been my highest priority taking precedence over my own needs. At this point, I wish to emphasize to our youth that I sincerely believe that my respect for my parents is the main reason for the blessings that G-d has bestowed upon me. I pray for a long and happy life for them.

From the early years of my life, I felt a special closeness to G-d, so I could speak with my heart to Him. I believe He would occasionally put me to test, as He does to all humans in some way. I am convinced that I always emerged successfully from those tests.

I studied in Dar-e-Gaz through ninth grade, and then moved to Tehran with the generous assistance of my uncle, Dr. Bassali.

In Tehran, I enrolled in "ORT", a technical school of international reputation.

I chose electronics for my education. Since I needed additional income, one of my teachers helped me find an evening job with the America Telecom Corp. The additional income made it possible for me to arrange for the migration of my family to Tehran.

A year later, I had to report to the army for my national service. I served as a lieutenant in the "Health Corps" in Isfahan province. After my service, I continued working for "Telecom", and later on, I obtained my post-technical degree in electronics by attending evening school.

At a later date, along with two of my fellow ORT students and colleagues in "Telecom", we established a technical

service company, named "Multi Com". We acquired the exclusive representation of a Canadian electronics corporation, as well as authorization for oil companies and government institutions.



*Fatollah 'Effy' Hematian  
c. 1960*

We also successfully built and marketed an electrical device named "converter". This device would store electricity and supply power in case of a power outage. This proved to be useful in those days of power interruption from the outset of the revolution. I donated one of these units to the "Anjoman Synagogue Complex" in Tehran.

Education in ORT, besides technical subjects, included basic studies of Judaism. This training also helped me to get closer to G-d, but stay away from superstition. It must be noted that it is the duty of all parents in our community to teach their children love and fear of G-d from a young age. In particular, children should be taught not to treat others the way they don't want to be treated themselves. This is the essence of Judaism.

A most significant event in everyone's life is marriage. No person is complete without getting married. I had pledged to marry as soon as I felt G-d was showing me the right girl, and as soon as I had just enough means to support a very basic family life. This occurred to me when I was 30.

The way I became acquainted with my wife, Anita is very interesting. The suggestion came from Mrs. Heshmat Bassali. The immediate response from her family was negative, but due to her grandmother's firm request, she agreed to go out with me. That evening I told her of my wishes and aspirations, of my future plans, my family and my responsibilities. Later that night, after hearing me out, Anita gave me a positive response, although as she told me later, she had planned to reject me when she left home. Thus is how our shared life began. In fact, my luck in life began the moment she gave me the positive response. Anita has been a true partner in my life. She took over the responsibility for children and home affairs with strength and wisdom, so that I could face my business challenges with a clear mind. I thank G-d for making her path cross mine.

At this point I wish to give a word of advice to the community's brides-to-be. Please do not reject outright our community's young men who approach you. Reward him for his courage. Give him a chance. You never know. A few hours of a sincere exchange of views can make a difference. Put your trust in G-d. Pick the right man, even if he is not rich... yet!

One year after our marriage, our first son was born when I was 31. This coincided with the Iranian revolution. Due to the imposed curfew the "brit" was held in my own house in a very private manner. Two months later, we decided to depart for the U.S. because neighbors told us that some government agents had been asking about the nature of my dealing with the Shah's agencies.

After we left Iran, my father-in-law, my brothers and my partners were arrested for a while, but were released from prison due to the intervention of the Iranian Jewish Society, but my home, my company and other assets remained confiscated.

After my first son, G-d gave us two more sons and a daughter. I firmly believe in the value and effectiveness of a parent's

blessing. I believe G-d has favored me to such an extent due to my parents' blessing.

In recent years G-d blessed us with two beautiful daughters-in-law and one wonderful son-in-law, for whom we are forever grateful and we wish them well. My wish is that I will always be a source of pride for my wife, parents, and my entire family.

After coming to New York, we lived for a while with the late Mr. Albert Rahmanan, my wife's uncle. Mrs. Lily Rahmanan and her late husband were extremely generous and hospitable, not only to us, but also to the young Mashadis that would come to the U.S. for studies. Our deep thanks and best wishes are extended to Mrs. Rahmanan and her family.



We temporarily rented a small apartment, hoping that the market in Iran would return to its pre-revolution situation. That obviously did not happen, and I had to start working again.

My expertise was in the field of communication and wireless systems, but that field was saturated in the U.S. and I had to try something else. I felt at that time like I was drowning in a vast ocean. I was very careful with the limited assets that I had brought with me. At the same time I had full confidence in G-d support.

One evening at home, I noticed my wife was weeping quietly. I inquired about the reason. She reluctantly spoke up and said, I don't know what great sin we have committed to deserve such a situation."

To that statement I replied, "We should be thankful to be here. If we had stayed in Tehran, I probably would also be in prison now. It all depends on G-d and we have to put our trust in Him." My statement relaxed my wife as if she saw a new ray of hope.

Sometime later, Mr. David Bassalali invited us to dinner. That evening after dinner, he made me an offer to start a partnership in the jewelry business. He said that he would accept the risk of possible losses in such a partnership. This offer gave me the courage to enter the jewelry business. After consulting with my wife, I accepted David's offer and our partnership began. I consider myself very fortunate to have him as a partner. His guidance has been a valuable ingredient in our success. His knowledge of the suppliers and materials has been instrumental in our business. One might wonder whose "mazal" has brought us success. His or mine, or both!

I have always indicated that I will never be the party to initiate termination of our partnership. That would be only in David's hands. Gratitude and recognition of kindness are important human virtues.

Our success story began on that fateful afternoon when I was passing by Saks Fifth Avenue carrying my samples with me. I felt as if some supernatural power was pulling me into the department store. I was well aware of the fact that my merchandise was not suitable for such an expensive store. Still I ended up at the jewelry department on the second floor.

A middle-aged courteous lady greeted me with a smile and asked if she could do anything for me.

I explained that I was looking for the jewelry buyer, not knowing that she was indeed the main Saks buyer who by sheer chance happened to be there at that particular moment on that particular day!

She smiled, wondering how come I did not know her. Then she said, "Let's see what you have." After looking at my goods, she said she liked my merchandise, and would like to pick a dozen pieces on memorandum basis and send them to their "Bal Harbour" branch. The word, "memorandum" was unfamiliar to me. I returned to my office and asked David what it meant. He said, "Don't worry, it means have faith in G-d."

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We sent the goods to Florida and waited impatiently for the results. Two or three weeks later I called the store inquiring about our jewelry.

The manager informed us happily that almost half of the pieces had been sold. I asked him to report the sale to the store buyer in New York. Soon afterward I received a phone call from her informing me that she was planning to visit my office, along with a group of her colleagues. (Incidentally she always called me 'Sonny' and continued to do so for many years.) But, there was a problem! At that time my office was incredibly small. There was a desk, two chairs and a phone. Nevertheless, I did not want to pass up the opportunity. When the buyer, Mrs. Mony and her manager came she took my seat and everyone else stood! I went downstairs and brought them donuts! Mrs. Mony encouraged the store's managers to choose a substantial quantity from my small line.

Another contributing factor in the success of this operation is my love for designing and arts in general. This is the backbone of the beauty of any merchandise. Yet another important factor in my success has been my passion for the job. It occupies my mind during all hours of day and night.

I suggest to all the young men of our community to rise early in the morning, dress well in a presentable manner and go to work with self-confidence. Faith, passion, and hard work, bring about mazal as well. Do not ever allow pride to dominate you. Stay humble and be generous with your money. This is a heavenly virtue.

I have faced a lot of ups and downs in my life. I am proud to say that the secret of my success is the respect I have for my parents, and the pleasure I take in serving them. Parents are partners with G-d in bringing children to this world.

I knew it all came from Hashem, because for some unknown reason "Saks Fifth Avenue" decided to place our goods in their full-page holiday season ad and in their catalogue at their own expense.

Soon after that ad hit the market, I got bombarded with many, many calls from other top jewelry retailers in Saks category. For some strange reason, which to this date is a mystery to me, everyone wanted our merchandise. I have kept two of those memorable ads to this date. That was the start of our success story.

The Persian lyric says, "When the luck comes your way, you can pull it with a thin strand of hair, but when it retreats, even heavy chains prove insufficient." In addition, to G-d's will, I believe my success is due to delegating responsibilities. To use a Persian proverb, "You cannot clap with one hand." Success of any organization depends on the collective effort of all its members. A good manager is a person that can create a warm and friendly atmosphere to give employees a sense of belonging.

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#### *A Note from Shalom Magazine*

What you have just read is the complete text of an interview with Mr. Hematian.

It is important to point out that he did not want to elaborate on some important issues, but we obtained some additional comments from his close friends, relatives, and colleagues that are summarized here.

Mr. Hematian has been honored numerous times by various bodies. These events have been held by business related organizations, Jewish charities, educational organizations or by Israel support groups. A great many organizations and individuals have benefited from his generosity.

Mr. Hematian was the initiator of the community by-laws, and has been a major donor and contributor for the establishment of all community synagogues.

As he pointed out, Mr. Hematian considers himself as one of G-d's servants and one of His tools to assist other human beings. Effy believes that what he owns is in fact G-d's riches placed in his hands to help others. He raises his hands to heavens every morning and acknowledges his identity to his Creator, namely, the same humble Fatollah from Dar-e-Gaz. He stands in front of a mirror every morning and reminds himself of the same fact, so that he will never fall prey to pride and arrogance.

Those who routinely meet Effy, testify that he is indeed a friendly, modest, and kind man who is always prepared to help.

It is for good reason that among the finest and most dedicated of his employees, are those women who carry the responsibility of their families on their own shoulders. It is for good reason that his establishment brings mazal and blessings to the employees, and a great many young girls and boys find their spouses, soon, almost magically soon, after they start working there.

Shalom editors, like other members of this community, pray for long life and happiness to Mr. Effy Hematian and his family, and Mr. David Bassalali and his family.

#### *A Note from the Editor:*

*This article is based on an interview conducted by "Shalom Magazine" with Mr. Hematian roughly 14 years ago, in 2009. Mr. Hematian was interviewed in Farsi, and the article was published in "Shalom Magazine" in both Farsi, and in English via translation.*

*The Editorial Staff of "Megillah" would like to sincerely thank Mr. Ephraim Aminoff & "Shalom Magazine", who initiated the plan to include this article in "Megillah", and worked with us to make it possible.*

# Megillah Celebrates the Grand Opening of the Community's First Primary School: Magen Ephraim Sephardic Academy



MAGEN EPHRAIM  
SEPHARDIC ACADEMY

## *A Welcome Letter from our General Studies Principal Mr. Ofier Sigal*

Welcome to Magen Ephraim Sephardic Academy!

I extend a warm welcome to our esteemed school community, where we provide a secure, nurturing, and enriching Jewish environment. As the Principal, I am pleased to witness the growth and development of our students under the guidance of our dedicated and compassionate teachers as they receive an exceptional introduction to secular and Jewish education. Our vibrant atmosphere offers an immersive experience in living Judaism, fostering a profound appreciation for Torah and Israel among our young learners.

Every day is filled with engaging activities, combining fun, learning, and play as children immerse themselves in our stimulating and enriched dual curriculum. We seamlessly integrate Judaic and English activities within a developmentally appropriate setting, encompassing language arts, music, science, art, dramatics, and physical movement.

At the core of our educational approach lies a strong emphasis on individualism, addressing each child's unique physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and creative needs and interests. We are committed to nurturing a sense of confidence and achievement as our students master new skills and experience success.

Recognizing the significance of the partnership between home and school, we actively foster strong communication, welcoming your active participation in special events and encouraging your involvement in all school-related activities.

I eagerly anticipate sharing this exciting year with you and your children at Magen Ephraim Sephardic Academy.

Ofier Sigal  
General Studies Principal

## *A Welcome Letter from our Judaic Studies Principal Rabbi Yosef Bitton*

Berukhim HaBayim BeShem HaShem.

As the principal of Magen Ephraim's Judaic studies, my heart is filled with joy as I welcome you and your precious children to our school. The journey on which we are embarking together is both beautiful and sacred.

The early years of a child's education are not merely about mastering letters or numbers; they encompass instilling values, nurturing souls, and laying a foundation anchored in our cherished Sephardic traditions. Our Torah emphasizes the importance of imparting knowledge to the young. At our school, we ensure that every child is imbued with the warmth of the Torah and the love of HaShem.

Magen Ephraim stands as a testament to the seamless blending of age-old Jewish wisdom with contemporary educational approaches. Your child will embark on an expansive academic journey under the guidance of our outstanding educators. Simultaneously, they will be introduced to the richness of our Sephardic values, rituals, and melodies, nurturing their soul with the light of Torah.

In this sacred partnership, we join hands. Together, we will witness their growth, celebrate their milestones, and ensure their roots delve deep into the rich soil of our Jewish tradition and heritage. May HaShem bless our efforts, allowing each child to flourish into a beacon of Torah, wisdom, and good deeds.

Thank you for entrusting us with the sacred mission of discovering and nurturing the potential within each precious child under our care.

BeBirkat HaTora, with blessings of the Torah,

Rabbi Yosef Bitton  
Judaic Studies Principal

General Studies Principal

Mr. Ofier  
Sigal



Judaic Studies Principal

Rabbi Yosef  
Bitton



Elementary Transitional  
Liason

Mrs. Shirin  
Rahmani



Judaic Studies  
Assistant Principal

Rabbi Adam  
Sabzevari



# GRAND OPENING CEREMONY MAGEN EPHRAIM SEPHARDIC ACADEMY

SEP 5, 2023 - ELUL 19, 5783







# Shabbat and Quality of Life

Rabbi Yosef Bitton

Over the last few years, our community has slowly moved towards enhancing its observance of Judaism. Historically, our community has impeccably observed Pesach (even before the Allah Dadi), considered charity a fundamental value (especially when a family or individual is in need), and maintained the highest standards of Kashrut in our homes. Regarding 'Kibbud Horim' (honoring one's parents), I believe our community serves as a global role model. Moreover, in recent times, a significant number of young couples have embraced 'taharat hamishpacha' (family purity), resulting in more women visiting the Mikveh than ever before.

Historically, our community has conscientiously upheld the vast majority of the mitzvot, including the observance of Shabbat. Shabbat holds a paramount position in its impact on Jewish life. Members of our community refrain from working or conducting business on Shabbat, irrespective of very significant potential financial losses. Activities like sewing, planting, dyeing, and cooking are avoided by all on Shabbat. Everyone excels in honoring Shabbat with Kiddush, and splendid dinners and lunches shared with our parents, children, and extended families. Regular attendance at Kanissa is also commendable - a dedication that astonishes every visitor that comes from other parts of the world. Essentially, our community is 'shomer shabbat'. With just a few items to upgrade, with HaShem's

help, I'm sure we will improve in the future. I will present two examples of actions that can help us to revamp our Shabbat observance and will also impact our quality of life.

## Mental Health

Leaving aside a religious perspective, a 24-hour break from electronics and social media results in a 'dopamine baseline reset'. Cell phones are addictive because every new interaction gives our brain a dopamine 'shot'. Over time, our brains adjust, making it increasingly difficult to achieve the same pleasure levels, often leading to feelings of depression and lethargy. Taking a day off from cell phones helps recalibrate our dopamine levels, promoting happiness and efficiency. Recognizing these positive effects, many non-Jewish societies, cultures, and even high-tech companies have established 'unplugging' days. Experts in mental health and workplace efficiency often recommend the CEO to promote among the employees "turning off emails and messages" once per week to maintain peak performance. Our Divine CEO anticipated this recommendation and prescribed it to us 3,500 years ago.

## Fresh Air and Family Time

Among the numerous advantages of proper Shabbat observance are its contributions to our physical health and to our relationship quality. I know community members that walk or bike to Kanissa not only on Shabbat but even on weekdays, for 20 minutes or more. Why? They want to reap the proven benefits of exercise for our bodies' blood circulation, strengthen bones and muscles and beyond. A community doctor explained to me that walking also helps to avoid (or treat!) depression, better than any other known medication. Walking or biking to Kanissa on Shabbat provides invaluable benefits to our wellbeing, short and long term.

Additionally, the quality time spent walking or biking with our children is priceless. In today's fast-paced society, genuine connections can be rare. A weekly walk to Kanissa with our children presents a perfect opportunity to strengthen the most important bond in our lives. And, awesomely, it has become fashionable for elegantly-dressed men and women to bike through our village with suits or long dresses and helmets: a delightful addition to our community exotic landscape. A beautiful and colorful new normal! Shabbat observance lifts our spirits, but it also enriches our family relationships and enhances our quality of life.

*Shabbat Shalom!*



# Growing Up in Queens

Michael Mayer

I attended Hillcrest High School in Jamaica, Queens in 1983; this was two years after my bar mitzvah. By then I had forgotten where my tefillin was, as I was influenced by bad surroundings; my Mashadi heritage was slowly, slowly being wiped away. In December 1984, when I was 16 years old, a man named Bernard Goetz was approached by three African Americans on the subway. When they tried to rob him, he turned around and shot all three. One died, one survived, and one became crippled.

The next day at my high school, in the heart of Jamaica, was a day of rage. There were riots and everyone was told to go home early as police couldn't deal with the riots. I went to run out from the back door, but as I ran away, one of the gang members grabbed me and started slapping and bothering me. I got very very scared, and he kept saying 'I killed my brother last night'. I offered my money to him, but he didn't care; he then pulled out a knife and started threatening me. After a couple of minutes, one of these gang members that I knew came by: his name was Sean Almon, he had a class with me that he only attended when there was an exam, and he would sit next to me and force me to allow him to cheat. I asked Sean to please help, but he slapped me as well and told the other guy to leave and he would take care of me. He remembered me and escorted me to the subway on the train and said, 'go home and don't come back'. I never did, and I ended up transferring to Ezra Academy after pleading with my parents. In Ezra, I started to wear tefillin again and became more observant and my life, Baruch Hashem, changed to follow the better path. Today I look back and thank HaShem for the direction.

# Putting Back the Shopping Cart and Witnessing Other Random Acts of Kindness

Sharleen Ijadi

I recently read a fascinating study. Researchers arranged a "random act of kindness" in a public place. A volunteer (the giver) would help out a perfect stranger (the receiver), and afterwards their hormone levels (namely serotonin, oxytocin, and dopamine) were measured. Unsurprisingly, both parties had elevated levels of these hormones, decreased blood pressure levels, and increased feelings of self-esteem and optimism. Not so surprising. The really interesting part was that not only the giver and receiver experienced these benefits, but also the people who were walking by and just happened to witness the interaction! The witnesses, who had no direct involvement whatsoever, had elevated hormone levels too and reported feeling stronger and more energetic. Talk about a domino effect.

This study has lots of implications, mostly for parenting. I guess I found it especially interesting because I've witnessed my mother's acts of kindness all my life (more on my father's another time!). I mention these things not to embarrass her (although she will be for sure), but to point out character traits we can all learn from (and by we, I really mean me). Here are just a few examples:

## 1- Grocery Shopping 101

It doesn't matter if she's running late, if it's pouring rain, or if there is a foot of snow on the ground. My mother always puts the shopping cart back. Yes, it's standard practice to just leave it behind a parked car, and yes, there is a guy whose job it is to clear away the carts. But it goes against principle #1: inconvenience no one and treat others with respect and dignity. Being a "Kiddush Hashem" and doing something even as insignificant as returning the shopping cart makes G-d proud and makes the world a bit of a better place.

## 2- Here's my Coat-Check Ticket... and Some Dessert

My mother has yet to leave a party without bringing a little something for the coat check lady. She knows that this person often gets little respect and is probably exhausted. The small gesture and the attitude of gratitude really mean so much. She'll often add, "You're doing a great job!" when talking to any type of service person, be it a driver, a waiter, a gas station attendant, or some other type of employee. Spreading good vibes is a major part of her mission.

## 3- Don't You Look Pretty Today!

Ever notice something nice about someone but fail to mention it? Think of a compliment but end up holding back? Sorry to say, but growing up in our home, this was considered stealing. Or at least losing the opportunity to help someone feel happier or more confident. That's an amateur move equivalent to leaving money on the table after winning in a casino. What if you're not particularly fond of the person who will be receiving the compliment? Great! You get the chance to leave your ego at the door and work on becoming the best version of yourself.

## 4- All You Need is Love

Mom genuinely loves people. She's often the first to smile and say hello. She never waits for the other person to say hello first. When in conversation with several people, she'll make sure everyone feels included. When someone outside the community is present, she'll introduce herself and welcome them warmly. In other words, she never misses an opportunity to extend herself and be kinder than she needs to be.



## 5- G-d Bless You and You and You Too

You know when you go to a Brit Mila and get a bracha from the Sandagh? Well, according to my mother, you don't need a special occasion to bless the people around you. Friends, family, and everyone in between are often lucky enough to get them. Incidentally, you don't even have to know her to be the recipient of her blessings. She'll send blessings and good wishes (internally!) toward people just walking down the street. Like wishing kids happy, healthy lives. Wishing for singles to find their soulmates. Wishing good health to the elderly, etc. It's just automatic for her.



## 6- Positivity Bias

Have you ever heard the expression "things usually turn out better than you think"? That's one of my mother's famous sayings. In psychology, it's called having a positivity bias, but it's more than just seeing the glass as half full. My mother gave us a gift growing up: the concept that the Jewish people (and maybe especially our community) have special divine protection. Whereas the rest of the world relies on logic (like the number 7), the Jewish people supersede logic (like the number 8). An example of this would be the miracle of Chanukah, which lasted eight days, or the present-day miracle of the State of Israel thriving in the midst of all its enemies. This unrelenting belief that G-d "has my back" makes life a lot more pleasant and the unknown a lot less scary.

## 7- Happy Anniversary! I Love My New Freezer!

As many of you may know, my mother runs a food pantry and has clothing donations available to people who are in need. Where is this facility? In her garage. It's really amazing and requires a lot of patience. But sometimes there are so many food donations that all the garage refrigerators and freezers are temporarily filled. So in the past, in lieu of jewelry or designer goods, my mother has opted for appliances for her birthday or anniversary. Unconventional and next-level, but something to aspire to (alongside jewelry and other gifts!)

We really have no clue what the ramifications of our random acts of kindness will be or what things will be set into motion. Except that in Torah, it's a goal that is very deliberate and not random at all. Being kinder than we need to be. Sacrificing for other people. Treating them with respect. Making the world a better place. Our family has been lucky enough to witness it all. The hard part is making sure our children witness similar acts. Because it isn't just the receiver of an act of kindness who pays it forward; it's the witness too.

# *A Visit to Poland: Context, Purpose, Pride*

*Jasmine Dilmanian*

*A version of this article originally appeared on chabad.org.*



The infamous “Arbeit Macht Frei” sign felt smaller and strangely more unassuming in person. Upon entering Auschwitz on Chabad for Young Professionals (CYP)’s voyage to Poland this past February, this was my first thought. Walking through the concentration camp, today an organized tribute, with signs and a cafe up front, was less sad for me than it was eerie; it was pure horror.

When I found out about the trip, my decision was instantaneous. After seeing the movies, reading the books, visiting the museums, and hearing the stories, I was ready to go to ground zero of the Holocaust and take upon myself what I saw as an obligation for every Jew: Go see for yourself what humanity is capable of. At first, participating, to me, meant ‘seeing the concentration camps’, but it resulted in much more. While, I bore witness to places even worse than where my imagination had led me, our group, and the journey itself, lent three surprising areas of nuance to the experience: context, unity, and purpose.

By visiting death camps—the most harrowing portions of the itinerary—we saw what the tragic ends of the lives of many Holocaust victims were like. But what were the beginnings of their lives like? Their homes in the ghettos, and their real homes before that? And their businesses, synagogues, relationships, and daily lives? As a Mashadi Jew, I had little insight into the bustling Jewish life that existed for up to 1,000 years in pre-World War II Poland. The Warsaw of the past was described as the “New York of Europe” by our animated tour guide, Mordechai, who also threw Paris comparisons into the mix—a far cry from what the empty-hearted place feels like today. A trip participant, the grandson of a still-living “Schindler Jew,” shared stories and led us through much of his grandfather’s life, literally step by step, in Krakow. His grandfather later called us on FaceTime during our march through Birkenau.

At the Okopowa Street Jewish Cemetery in Warsaw, Poland, the largest still-functioning one in the world, Mordechai showed us the gravestones of various influential and humble people from throughout Polish history. Warsaw had once been a Jewish intellectual center, with other industrial, religious, and artistic communities throughout cities, towns, and villages across the country. The major cities of Poland were 30% or even 50% populated by Jews at one time—people of all classes and viewpoints who had roots going back generations, with possessions and livelihoods to match. About half of the Jewish Holocaust victims were in fact from Poland, which was the center of active Jewry in Europe. Today, there are about 500 known Jews in the capital city.



*Auschwitz Concentration Camp*

The colorful, millenium-old picture that was painted for us, of a long-lasting and thriving Jewish Poland (one that surely beats the New York City of 2023), was devastating; it set the scene for the scale and magnitude of the atrocity that was to come.

While learning more about historical European Jewry, including heroes like Dr. Janusz Korczak and Dr. Gisella Perl, was interesting for me, the Ashkenazis on the trip, with roots in the region, felt a visceral connection to the place, and each other. Astoundingly, two trip-goers figured out that their grandparents had been in an Austrian concentration camp together. Could their ancestors have fathomed in their darkest moments that one day their grandchildren would unite in Poland?

Our Polish tour guide, Auschwitz tour guides (also Polish), and shlichim (Chabad messenger who spreads the beliefs of Hasidism) bestowed on us stories, facts, perspectives and words of inspiration. We had clashes of opinion as much as we had moments of collective understanding; trying to wrap our heads around the tough existential questions that come with this level of hatred, we were together perplexed. Of course, as 36 strangers, our differences became miniscule in the realization that all of us would have been them.

After a day-long tour of the hellish Auschwitz-Birkenau, and the Majdanek labor camp three days prior, life’s big questions were on our mind, and we were all left pondering some version of “What now?”. With these thoughts still stewing, I wonder now why I experienced the trip in the way that I did. I didn’t grow up, as some of my Ashkenazi friends refer to it, “in the Holocaust.” While my core still identified with the victims, my perspective was one step removed from the enormity of it, unaware of the minute details and individual anecdotes that often delivered the biggest blows or the greatest sparks of inspiration.

It was only after I came home and spoke with my own grandmother that I learned, as she remembers herself, that many young Polish people went through Iran on the way to (what would become) Israel after the War, and they were harbored by Jewish families in several cities there, including Mashhad. Perhaps they had not a single thing in common externally, but they shared a secret language of customs that transcended borders or time. As for the travelers, some of the women in transit married local Jewish Persian men, and the rest went on to the Holy Land.

A major theme discussed on our trip was Jewish continuity. In light of the fate of the Jews of Poland, this was a question that we were forced to grapple with. It was not necessarily the if that we were concerned with, but the how. We touched on this future-focused topic during nightly talks; many stressed Jewish education, while others felt that traditions, strong connections, and acceptance were the keys to keeping the flame alive. While the why is too overwhelming for anyone to answer, living a daily life that is a response to our enemies is something very much within reach, and the strongest possible method of empowerment.

It also became evident in our discussions that a major part of purpose is pride. In the shadow of the Holocaust and other Jewish atrocities worldwide, many changed their names and even their full identities to mask what once was, mostly out of pain and fear. But the privileged Jews of today can harness our good fortune into pride, so we are taking steps to ensure that our ancestors did not suffer in vain. That our people are still going—publicly, unapologetically, and together.

Some might say that Poland in February is a less-than-ideal destination—and they would be correct. But these five days instilled a higher level of awareness in each person who participated—and awareness is knowledge, and as it is said, knowledge is power.

# The Benefits of Intermittent Fasting

Michael Hakimian

Recently, several people have asked me: “did you lose weight?”, “is your face skinnier?”, and “why were you such a fatso before?”. The answer (to the first two) is: intermittent fasting, light exercise, and clean eating.

Disclaimer: You might experience some unwanted side effects, such as 1) Needing to tailor clothes, 2) Being victim to unsolicited advances from supermodels like Kylie Jenner and Gigi Hadid, and 3) Not being as effective on the playground see-saw. That being said, this lifestyle really is good for everyone.

## Fast & effects

Start by simply skipping breakfast. Water, black coffee, and tea are okay (even a tiny bit of milk and sugar will ruin it). After about 12-14 hours of virtually no caloric intake, your body will go into ketosis, and will start to break down and use stored fat cells. Your focus will improve, and some people experience reduced inflammation (your joints will feel better), and there are a ton of other benefits (reduced blood pressure, lower risk of diabetes, etc.).

## LIGHT exercise

Break a sweat for 20-30 minutes, three times per week. This can be with anything, but pick something you enjoy, so that you can stick with it. For example, I don't like running (except to the fridge), so I won't do that. Instead, I might use a kettlebell (max. 20 pounds), light rubberbands, or use my own body weight for workouts, such as push ups and sit ups (my kids usually help me add weight by jumping on my back when I'm not looking). "Studies show that exercise boosts mood, increases longevity (length of life), improves memory, and more. Exercise can be 4-5 times more effective than anti-depressants."

## Eating clean

Skip the processed foods. Not only are they loaded with preservatives, sugar, and salt, but many non-natural foods can prove to be carcinogenic (G-d forbid). Food coloring dye is banned in many countries. Processed foods are only good for the pharmaceutical & insurance companies – not you. Eat whatever you want (carbs, etc.), but try to avoid processed foods. Skipping or reducing sugar intake will accelerate weight loss (doubly for avoiding refined wheat).

## Duration & Times

It's easier than you think: Most people stop eating at 8pm, and start at noon (16 hours), but it's easy to eventually push that to 18 hours, or even longer on occasion. I have done 36 and 48 hour fasts, and I have a friend who did a three-day fast. Some celebrities have boasted 11 day fasts. The 'OG' of intermittent fasting is Moses, who did it for 40 days, twice, from a mountaintop! (Disclaimer: No representation or warranty that intermittent fasting will yield prophecy).

## Cheating

The good news is that it's okay to cheat once in a while (but not on your wife). It's sometimes very difficult to keep an intermittent fast, like on Shabbat or at parties, so give yourself a pass on these days.

*Good luck and see you in 10 pounds!*



**ALL COMMUNITY YOUTH, BOTH LADIES & GENTLEMEN, ARE ENCOURAGED TO JOIN THE OHR ESTHER YOUTH MINYAN ON SHABBATS!**

**LOCATION:** Downstairs @ 130 Steamboat Rd, Great Neck, NY

**SCHEDULE:** 9:30 AM Shacharit, 10:45 AM Torah Reading, 11:30 AM Musaf  
12:00 PM D'var Torah, 12:15 PM Kiddush & Light Lunch Buffet

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# IRS Quietly Changed the Rules on Your Children's Inheritance

Robert Bichoupan

Property, such as a home, held in an irrevocable trust 'that is not included in the taxable estate at death' will no longer receive a step-up in basis. Here's why the wording of that is key. In March, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued Revenue Ruling 2023-2, which had a substantial impact on estate planning, particularly where an irrevocable trust is involved. In the last decade or so, more families have begun utilizing irrevocable trusts to protect their assets from spend-down in order to qualify for government benefits, such as Medicaid.

## Why Do I Need a Trust?

Prior to the issuance of this ruling, it was unclear whether assets passing to beneficiaries through an irrevocable trust would receive a step-up in basis, thereby eliminating any capital gains taxes that would otherwise be owed. Historically, assets that are disposed of during an individual's lifetime are subject to capital gains taxes on the increase in value of that asset over time. The amount of capital gains owed is determined largely by the difference between the value at the time of purchase and the value at the time of transfer. An exception to the obligation of capital gains taxes has been when assets pass at the death of the owner to their beneficiaries. The death of the owner bestows upon the recipients a step-up in basis, so they inherit the asset as if it had been purchased at the current fair market value, not the value at the time the asset was actually purchased. This eliminates any capital gains, and so, no taxes become due.

## What about an irrevocable trust?

But what to do about assets in an irrevocable trust? They are not currently held by the purchaser of the asset, nor have they passed to the beneficiaries. Prior to March 2023, such transfers from the trust at death have generally been receiving the step-up in basis. But that may not be the case any longer. This new ruling by the IRS states that property held in an irrevocable trust that is not included in the taxable estate at death will not receive a step-up in basis any longer.

At first glance, it sounds like anyone who does irrevocable trust planning will be subjecting their children to additional taxes. You may be wondering why anyone would do irrevocable trust planning in the first place. As Americans are aging and living longer, more are finding themselves in need of long-term care to the tune of, on average, \$6,500 to \$16,000 per month, depending on where you live and what level of care you need.



Very few families can afford to pay that out of pocket without depleting their life savings, which means turning to programs like Medicaid to help with the cost. However, before you can qualify for such programs, you will be expected to go through a spend-down of your assets to a level set by the state in which you reside. One of the only tools that can protect your assets from being subject to the spend-down process is an irrevocable trust.

Does asset protection planning now mean that to avoid the spend-down, you will have to subject your children to additional taxes? Maybe. The key part of the IRS' decision is that only those assets that are held in an irrevocable trust, that are not otherwise included in your estate at death for estate tax purposes, will lose the step-up in basis. What does that mean? Essentially, in a move that is likely meant to make sure that as many estates as possible become subject to paying estate taxes, if you establish an irrevocable trust that is not set up properly, you will lose the step-up in basis.

## How an irrevocable trust is set up is important.

It is possible to establish an irrevocable trust that allows for any assets of the trust to still be included in the taxable estate at death — keeping in mind that most families, even with the inclusion of the value of their home, will not have estates large enough to be subject to estate taxes. Thus, your assets can be protected from spend-down due to long-term care, avoiding capital gains taxes and estate taxes and passing to your children tax-free. It just takes very careful planning.

By way of example, let's look at a couple whom we will call Fred and Ethel. Fred and Ethel purchased a home in 1975 for \$300,000. If that house is now worth \$1,250,000 and they sell that house, they will owe capital gains taxes on the growth of \$950,000. In contrast, had Fred and Ethel transferred their home to an irrevocable trust, prior to March 2023, the trust could sell the house from a cost basis of \$1,250,000, not \$300,000 (because of the step-up in basis), so no capital gains would be due when the trust then distributes those proceeds to Fred and Ethel's children. Post-Revenue Ruling 2023-2, unless the trust is properly worded to ensure that the \$1,250,000 value of the home is included in Fred and Ethel's taxable estate, the children will owe capital gains on \$950,000. Most families will not find themselves subject to estate tax when the value of their home is included because the current federal estate tax is only applicable to estates valued at \$12.92 million or more. It will be more likely to impact families when the estate tax limit is lowered in 2026 to about half of that exemption amount.

If you currently have real estate and an irrevocable trust, or are interested in learning more about one, seek legal counsel from an attorney who is knowledgeable in both real estate and estate planning. Also, it is always a good idea to get your tax professional involved in the conversation so that nothing is missed in your plan. The world is becoming more complex, as are the tax laws, but you (and your children) can still come out ahead with sound advice and planning. Nothing contained herein is intended as legal or tax advice. Please contact Robert Bichoupan at (516) 482-1186 or [Robert@Bichoupan.com](mailto:Robert@Bichoupan.com) for further information.

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# Megillah Mourns the Loss of Mr. David Kordvani ז"ל דוד בן ידידיה ז"ל

The following section of *Megillah* is a tribute to Mr. David Kordvani (David ben Yedidya ז"ל), of blessed memory.

Mr. Kordvani (1952 - 2023) was devoted to serving the Mashadi Jewish Community ever since their arrival in Great Neck, NY. Inspired by his great passion for the Community and its heritage, Mr. Kordvani was instrumental in establishing the Community's first Youth Minyan and the publication of the first ever "*Mashadi Wedding Album*". Mr. Kordvani served multiple terms as a Synagogue Board Member and Chairman for *Shaare Shalom*.

*The Editorial Staff of Megillah would like to extend our condolences to the family and friends of Mr. Kordvani, along with our appreciation for his lifelong dedication and service to the Mashadi Jewish Community.*

## ***Top 12 Reasons Why I'm Proud to be a Mashadi*** *David Kordvani ז"ל*

*This article was written by Mr. David Kordvani ז"ל, 14 years ago for "Shalom Magazine". It shows David's love of the community and his immense pride in being Mashadi. This pride was reflected in the many ambitious projects which he initiated and always followed through to ensure their success.*

1) **"DIVORCE" IS NOT A POPULAR WORD IN THE MASHADI VOCABULARY:** Even though there is no community that is immune to marital problems, Mashadi couples seem to be able to somehow tough it out for the sake of the children and family and stay together. This remarkably minimal divorce rate within the Mashadi Community is a phenomenon admired by all other communities and nationalities.

2) **YOUR CHILD IS MY CHILD:** When a young boy reads the Torah for his Bar Mitzvah, every man and woman roots for the young Bar Mitzvah boy who is reading the Torah for the first time not to make a mistake; it is as if it's their own child that is reading. Next time please look at the faces of the congregants and see how much every single person cares that somebody else's little one will do a good job!

3) **WHEN YOUR CHILD LEAVES ON VACATION:** If you know that any older Mashadi is going to be in the same hotel as your teenager who has gone on vacation too, you feel safe due to the fact that in case of an emergency, that particular Mashadi family, even though you might not know them that well, will take care of your child as if it's their own child.

4) **FAMILY SANCTITY IS KEPT 100%:** With groups and cliques being so close and tight-knit, you hardly ever hear, G-d forbid, about infidelity amongst Mashadis with other Mashadis.

5) **MAGICAL POWER OF THE "MASHADI TITLE":** There is a concept that when a Jew wears a Kipa, he should be extra careful not to do something bad or something that a good Jew just wouldn't do. Being called a Mashadi, in a certain way, serves the same purpose. A true Mashadi is generally embarrassed to do anything bad. Whether it is in business, married life, assimilation, etc. Just the title of "Mashadi" has special powers to stop one from doing something that just doesn't look good.



6) **THE FEAR OF G-D IS THERE, NO MATTER WHAT:** Almost all Mashadis, no matter how observant or lenient they might be are true believers; deep down every single Mashadi is G-d fearing!

7) **BEING CHARITABLE FLOWS IN MOST MASHADI'S BLOOD:** The Mashadi community is one of the most charitable per percentage of income amongst all Jewish communities and for that matter within the Human Race. The love for giving charity is clearly evident even in Mashadi teenagers. Recently, an American professional who held the job of our synagogue's "Teenagers Youth Director" was quoted as saying, "I have been a Youth Director to many Jewish communities but in all my years I've never seen such sincere devotion and passion to give charity by teenagers like the one I experienced on Yom Kippur at the Mashadi Jewish Center!"

8) **CARING:** When someone is sick or in need of spiritual help, everyone prays with one voice. And from the bottom of their heart - believing that praying really helps the sick; it is a priceless “asset” to have in reserve, to have so many people sincerely pray for you or your loved one, if G-d forbid it is ever needed.

9) **RESPECTING THE ELDERS:** This brings pride and joy to my heart when I see little kids in Shul running to their grandparents, on their own and as an instinct, just to kiss their hands. When you look at these kids you realize that they do this only because they want to, and not because they were told to do so. It is especially remarkable to witness this in a society where respect for elders is a thing of the past. In fact some comedians even make a career out of making fun of their own parents and grandparents. Without a doubt, Mashadis rank among the very top in the whole world as far as respecting parents and elders.

10) **INSTANT CREDIT:** Even in the most remote corners of the universe, including small villages in China and Vietnam, the mere mention of being a Mashadi, usually results in instant business credit that takes other honorable but non-Mashadi businessmen years to establish.

11) **WEALTH MAKES NO DIFFERENCE:** The super wealthy, wealthy and well to do and even very normal couples mingle with each other and belong to the same cliques (Dorehs). There is no other society in which the amount of wealth has so little bearing on friendship and association as with the Mashadi Community.

12) **THE “KANISSA” IS THE “PLACE TO BE”:** How many other communities can you find on a gorgeous 80 degrees sunny Shabbat, their Synagogue would be the “cool” place to be... young and old, men and women, observant or less so. They almost all choose the Kanissa over the pool/park/beach or any other place on earth!

#### **CONCLUSION:**

These are only some of the points of view that you might have never thought about. There are countless admirable virtues that we all know that have always distinguished this blessed community through its rich history. These virtues have placed us among the top of all Jewish communities in the world - and, they have made membership to this community an HONOR!

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## **PROGRESS IN MOTION: OHR ESTHER SYNAGOGUE'S INITIAL ACHIEVEMENTS**

*Submitted by Jonathan Levian*

The Ohr Esther Synagogue board is pleased to present a snapshot of the significant accomplishments achieved during the inaugural months of our term. These achievements underscore our dedication to fostering growth, nurturing communities, and ensuring the responsible stewardship of resources.

- The Children's Program
- Welcoming Rabbi Michael Livi to the Youth Minyan
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Building Decorum

#### ***Elevating Young Minds: Expanding Kids Programming:***

From humble beginnings with just a game room and a baby room, our commitment to providing an enriching experience for our youth has led us to a remarkable transformation. Presently, our offering includes a diverse selection of 8+ classes tailored for boys and girls aged 2 to 12. The heartening response has seen class attendance reach a staggering 250+ kids per week. This expansion signifies not only a shift in scope but a genuine investment in the development and well-being of the younger generation within our congregation.

#### ***Embracing Leadership: Welcoming Rabbi Michael Livi:***

Recognizing the burgeoning size of our youth minyan and the multifaceted needs it presents, the addition of Rabbi Michael Livi as Assistant Youth Rabbi and Chazzan has been pivotal. His innate ability to connect with our youth on a personal and spiritual level has had a significant impact. The youth minyan now enjoys the guidance of a seasoned leader, enhancing the sense of community and spiritual engagement among our younger members.



#### ***Financial Stewardship: Exercising Fiscal Responsibility:***

Integral to our commitment is the sound management of our financial resources. In our preliminary months, the board has demonstrated a meticulous approach to controlling costs while remaining dedicated to the well-being of our programs. By ensuring the careful allocation of funds, we prioritize the sustainability of our initiatives, thus safeguarding the long-term vitality of our community.

#### ***Enhancing Sacred Spaces: Improving Building Decorum:***

A house of worship is more than just bricks and mortar; it's a sanctuary that encapsulates our spiritual values. With this in mind, we embarked on a journey to enhance the ambiance of our building. Thoughtful improvements, from aesthetic considerations to the arrangement of sacred artifacts, have combined to create an atmosphere of reverence and unity. This restoration is a testament to our unwavering commitment to creating an environment conducive to spiritual growth and communal togetherness.

Our accomplishments to date are a product of the dedication and collaboration of each member of our congregation. The collective effort of the clergy, board members, and every individual involved has shaped our achievements and embodies the essence of community spirit.

As we celebrate these early victories, we remain acutely aware that this is only the prologue of our journey. Our drive for continuous improvement and innovation propels us forward with renewed vigor. Together, we're set to author the next chapters of our shared narrative, raising the bar for excellence within our community. Our gratitude extends to every congregant, whose unwavering support, participation, and enthusiasm have elevated our progress. We look forward with anticipation and optimism to the path ahead, guided by the light of Ohr Esther Synagogue.

*With sincere appreciation,  
The Ohr Esther Synagogue Board*



# RECENT ENGAGEMENTS



Raphael Gorjian & Stefanie Wasser



Ori Turgeman & Noa Livi



Evan Kalatizadeh & Allison Adler



Aaron Hekmati & Kayla Siouni



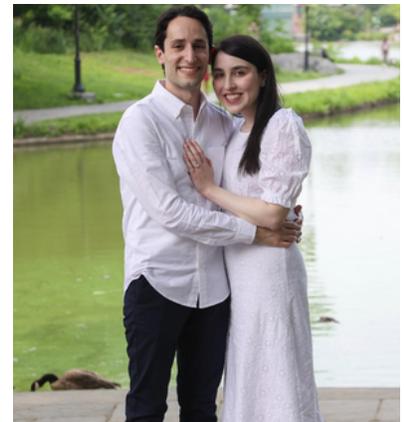
Scott Hakimian & Sophie Hadjibay



Eric Khorsandi & Sara Supovitz



Josh Namdar & Yasmine Yaghoubi



Jacob Kalatizadeh & Tova Goldstein



Nadav Hematian & Sophia Eliassi



Yoni Hassin & Shaina Hakimian



Marc Strum & Sonia Karmily



Emanuel Shaddaie & Keren Elezam



Elliot Safra & Naomi Yekutiel



Josh Hendizadeh & Elicia Bessaleli



Jacob Gorjian & Kayla Hakimian



Auriel Yaghoubian & Sharona Moheban Levy



Dustin Kamali & Lauren Hakimi



Adam Hajibai & Maya Gorjian



## YEAR-END REPORT FROM THE MASHADI YOUTH COMMITTEE

*Submitted by Kayla Hakimian*

Below we've listed many of the events that the MYC has planned over the last 6 months. We hope that with the help of HaShem, we on the MYC will be able to continue organizing amazing, enjoyable and meaningful events in the coming year!

**Purim Party at Colbeh:** Our Purim bash at Colbeh was a big hit, and as always featured many memorable costumes that showcased the creativity of the youth.

**M'atanot La'evenim – Helping Those in Need:** 150+ community youth participated in this Khesed program, and helped package, wrap and deliver food and other essential items, disguised as Mishloach Manot, to the less fortunate. Thanks to the amazing turnout and support, we were able to deliver care packages to over 200 families in the NYC metro area.

**White Shabbat Luncheon:** After Passover, the MYC hosted a White Shabbat (as it is customary for those who were away to wear white to show off their tan) luncheon which attracted a record breaking 300+ attendees.

**Pizza and Wine Night:** Hosted at the beautiful residence of Simon & Kathy Kamali, this evening featured on-site pizza ovens, manned by professional chefs, who were serving up a variety of delicious pizza pies, along with several pastas and other dairy cuisine. Lounge music was playing in the background, wine & champagne were served, setting the perfect ambience for mingling and hanging out with friends. We'd like to thank the Kamali family for making this event possible.

**Summer Soiree:** Our annual *Summer Soiree* was hosted at the gorgeous residence of Behrouz & Suzy Hakimian. The evening was catered by Dennis from Eilat Meats, and featured music from DJs Josh Gorjian, Itai Hakimian & Warren Kalaty. Our 250+ guests did a lot of dancing, and had a lot of fun. We'd like to thank the Hakimian family for making this event possible.

**Shiur by Rabbi and Rabbanit Bitton:** We had the honor of organizing a Shiur by Rabbi and Rabbanit Bitton. We left feeling spiritually uplifted, right in time for the high holidays. Thank you to our gracious hosts, Mr. & Mrs. Moses Hajibai & Family.

**Summer Seneca Trip:** Our Summer trip to Camp Seneca Lake was an absolute hit! Over 150 community youth gathered for a weekend of bonding, activities, sports and having a good time. We all shared many laughs, and were able to enjoy the beautiful weather we were blessed with. We'd like to give a big thank you to the Camp Seneca Lake Director, Mr. Ross Zuckerman. The meals, accommodations and all the activities throughout the entire camp were phenomenal.

**Rosh Hashanah Gift Basket Packing:** To spread love during the High Holidays, we organized a Rosh Hashanah Gift Basket packing event to encourage acts of kindness. Those who attended were able to prepare special gifts for loved ones.

Currently, we're in the process of collaborating with renowned speakers, planning an inspirational Shabbat project weekend, and exploring partnerships with the senior club and local hospitals.

None of this would be possible without the support and enthusiasm from fellow community members. Your ideas and feedback are incredibly valuable to us, so don't hesitate to reach out and share your thoughts.

# FAKE LETTERS TO THE FAKE EDITOR

## *Letter to the Fake Editor:*

Dear Fake Editor,

With thanks to HaShem, me and my wife are currently expecting our first child. My wife is insistent on selecting a name that is "cool" like names her friends have given their kids. Do you have any ideas for us?

## *Reply from the Fake Editor:*

Dear Reader,

Yes, I've actually done some research on this topic and think you can learn a lot from George Costanza. He sought to give his child a cool and original name too, and against the advice of his friend Jerry Seinfeld, George decided on the name '**Seven**', as a tribute to Yankees' great, Mickey Mantle, who wore **#7**. Though, this should serve as a cautionary tale, as another couple found out, stole his idea and named their newborn '**Seven**'. Upon learning this news George was furious and said "*Now it's (the name Seven) not gonna be original! It's gonna lose all its cache!!!*". So, in accordance with the wisdom of George Costanza, I suggest you name your child as a tribute to your favorite sports legend. If you're a Michael Jordan fan, go with the name 'Twenty-Three', as he wore **#23**. Or if you're a LeBron fan, you can go with the name 'Six', in honor of his 6 NBA finals losses. Whichever you decide, keep it a secret so nobody finds out and steals your name!



If you'd like to ask the Fake Editor a question, please reach out via email to:

[FakeEditor@mashadiyouth.org](mailto:FakeEditor@mashadiyouth.org)

## *Letter to the Fake Editor:*

Dear Fake Editor,

I am a teenaged girl who just graduated from high school, and will soon be in the '*singles scene*'. Do you have any advice for me as I enter this new chapter of my life and seek to find my soulmate?

## *Reply from the Fake Editor:*

Dear Reader,

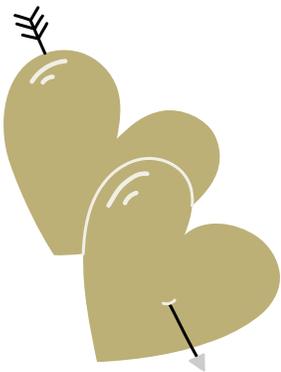
Yes, as many young ladies have begun to worry about how to conduct themselves while spending time with many of our community's young men, I've tirelessly worked with both the Central Board and MYC to prepare the following '*Scene Survival Guide*' for single ladies and gentlemen.

### *Survival Guide for the Ladies:*

1. Focus your attention on the boys that are the most genuine, caring and mature. A good indicator of this is if he is wearing a Rolex watch, then you'll know he might be the one.
2. When considering entering a relationship with a boy, you need to ask yourself very important questions, like: "What are the odds my kids will have blue eyes?" and "Is it likely that my boys will be good at basketball?"
3. If interested in a guy, you need to conceal your interest in him as much as possible. Don't make it obvious at all because guys are amazing at reading girls' minds, and are so talented at understanding girls that they'll immediately know if you are interested without you ever having to say a word.
4. Never, ever say "I'm not coming" to an event, party or trip. It is a lose-lose situation as you will be relentlessly harassed, and ultimately peer pressured into attending. But rather, if you really don't want to go, say "I'm coming" then last minute don't show up, put your phone on do-not-disturb, and to avoid being tracked down you need to hide-away somewhere that is always empty, somewhere that nobody will ever think to look, like Rainbow Convenience Store or the Main Sanctuary of Shaare Shalom (54).

### *Survival Guide for the Gentlemen:*

1. Identify the top three or four girls in each age group, and give them constant attention, because they likely have no other suitors and don't get much attention.
2. Interested in a girl? Don't make your intentions clear or ask her out. But rather, try to become best friends with her and get into her friendzone. That is the place you want to be, and means you're really going places.
3. Draw attention to yourself at all costs via goofy behavior. Behave like you did in Middle School, girls will love that and think you are very mature and '*marriage material*'.



---

*Letter to the Fake Editor:*

Dear Fake Editor,

My wife and I are in our mid 50s, and since we're at the peak of our lives and at prime partying-age, we're upset that no parties or events with music are allowed during the 9 days before Tisha B'av. These days in late July and early August are some of the premiere partying days on the calendar. Is there a way we can solve this problem?

*Reply from the Fake Editor:*

Dear Reader,

I truly sympathize with your current feelings, I myself am currently in my mid 20s, a boring age, as I need to focus on building a career and earning money. My friends and I all reminisce about the days of partying and having fun during high school and the early years of college. To see all of you in your 50s living it up and constantly having wild parties is truly an inspiration to us all, and we in our 20s can't wait until we reach our 50s, for the glory days of partying to arrive once again.

Anyways, with regards to your question, I approached some of our community Rabbis and asked if we could move the 9 days to a more convenient month like February, when nothing is going on anyway. They said no and made up some excuse about how we can't just change the dates as both Temples were destroyed on the 9th of Av. So, I took matters into my own hands, and wrote a letter to an even higher authority, Joe Biden, the President of the United States. His administration replied to my letter explaining that they're actually looking to ban Orthodox Judaism altogether, as the religion isn't tolerant enough of minorities and 'non-binary gendered persons'. Not sure what that means, but if that ban goes into effect, you won't have to worry about any religion getting in the way of your fun.

---

*Letter to the Fake Editor:*

Dear Fake Editor,

As the mother of a 12 year old girl and 13 year old boy, I am not comfortable with them attending the Gym Minyan for Kanissa along with the 16-18 year-olds. I don't think this is appropriate, as 16-18 year-olds are in their late stage of adolescence, and are often involved in drug and alcohol abuse. Shouldn't we have two separate minyans instead, one for 12-15 year-olds, and another for those 16-18?

*Reply from the Fake Editor:*

Dear Reader,

Although I understand your parental concern, I think you are way out of line here and probably need a massage because you seem overly stressed. 18 year-olds are overall very mature, and true models of mature behavior. Girls and especially boys at the age of 18, have truly amazing judgement and tend to make very smart decisions. This allows for a very healthy bond, as the 18 year-olds serve as unofficial mentors for those aged 12, and show them the ropes.

The problem facing 12 year-olds, is that they don't know how to properly have fun and embrace the magical American teenage lifestyle. The 18 year-olds are often experts in this department, and set a great example for their younger peers.

The older boys provide valuable insight to the younger boys on healthy ways to use various substances.

The older girls do a really great job showing their younger counterparts how to dress modestly, a skill that they'd otherwise lack!

Clearly, the 12 year-olds being together in the Gym Minyan with their 18 year-old role models is an essential part of the healthy coming-of-age process for our community youth. Breaking up the Gym Minyan and creating two separate Minyans for the different age groups could result in the 12 year-olds not learning how to properly have fun and not practice our community's new values.

---

## I'M GOING ON STRIKE

*In solidarity with my fellow writers and actors participating in the ongoing Hollywood SAG-AFTRA (Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) strike, I, the Fake Editor of Megillah, am now on strike.*

Originally, I had no intention to participate in this strike and protest against my Boss, the Real Editor, but one evening after a long day at the fake office, I was watching TV and watched the following:

**"We've got to unite as workers and demand the respect we deserve from the boss! In fact, you and I should go on strike!"**

- Squidward Tentacles, speaking with his colleague SpongeBob SquarePants regarding a salary reduction dispute with their boss, Mr. Krabs, the owner of the Krusty Krab. SpongeBob later loudly proclaimed: **"Krusty Krab is unfair! Mr. Krabs is in there! Standing at the concession! Plotting his oppression!"**

Upon seeing this, I instantly had a change of heart. While Mr. Krabs might be cheap, the Real Editor takes it to the next level. When I asked him for an increase in pay, he responded by telling me "the Fake Editor is a volunteer position and is considered community service, so there is no compensation." This is outrageous, we are living in 2023 and the Real Editor doesn't understand that volunteers do get paid these days. Just look at Bill & Hillary Clinton, the founders of the charitable Clinton Foundation who were paid millions each year for their vigorous volunteer work.

Given my revelation, I, the Fake Editor announce my strike and extend an invitation for you to join me, Squidward, SpongeBob and all the Hollywood actors & writers in this critical movement for workers' rights.

# MYC ISRAEL DISCOVERY TRIP

2023 - 5783

## Trip Recap & Highlights

Charlotte Dilmanian

On June 26, 2023 at 4:55 am, a group of 56 kids took a flight to Israel for their long-awaited MYC Israel Discovery Trip. They were accompanied by amazing chaperones, later to be called “family members”: Michael and Naomi Livi, Ariel and Karine Yacobi (with their adorable children: Shirel, Effi and Shai), Arieh Livieim, Rachel Aziz, Nataly Cohen, Gilad Azariahian, and Kayla Kalatizadeh. Throughout their three weeks in Israel together, the kids made some crazy, unforgettable memories that will last them all a lifetime.

### Some of these highlights include:

- Everyone flipping each other from their rafts up North.
- Faking Bar Mitzvah entrances.
- Arieh’s morning wakeups, where he’d say “feet on the ground or you drown” with a five-second countdown before getting water poured on them.
- Prank wars that lasted all night, until 6:00 in the morning.
- Everyone being so exhausted that they fell asleep on the tables at the first Shabbat at AISH Hatorah.
- Mongolian throat singing used for wakeups on bus rides.
- Rotem the tour guide concluding every bus ride on the microphone with tongue clicks, telling ‘all the ladies and not ladies’ to wake up their friends, neighbors and loved ones.
- The emotional moment when many of the girls saw the Kotel for the first time.
- Everyone being scared to lose their water bottles so they don’t need to give a Dvar Torah on Shabbat, like Charlotte and Kellen did.
- Thinking they almost lost a few girls on Shabbat, who were so exhausted, they fell asleep in a stairwell.
- Half the kids failing to make it to the buses on time, every single morning.
- All the guys trying to sneak up behind Avishai the madrich, to touch his gun
- Singing “bing bong bing” with Shai Shai.
- Our emotional night when everyone expressed their feelings around a bonfire with Avishai.
- A group of people getting stuck in a very hot elevator.
- Leo Hakimian trying a tomato for the first time at the Salad Trail.
- The last Shabbat, screaming “Shalom Aleichem” in a big circle all together.
- Alon’s dogs.
- Everyone looking like marshmallows in the suits they were given at the volunteer center.



- Ariel convincing all the girls to go rappelling when he was too scared to go himself.
- Everyone feeling good about themselves for helping to package food at the Mashadi Soup Kitchen.
- Bus karaoke.
- Feeling grateful after learning about what our ancestors went through during the Holocaust at Yad Vashem.
- Shirel and Effi yelling, “My name is Jonathan Zar”.
- The Havdallah’s that were sung loudly and passionately, together, united as one.
- Jon Zar’s story times.
- The long, rigid knife.
- The entire trip becoming extremely ‘FOB’ and learning to speak Farsi.
- Yelling and panicking at donkey and camel riding.
- Everyone unleashing their hidden talents during the Talent Show.
- Many of the guys having major injuries all within the first week of the trip.
- Staying up all night, excited, in anticipation of climbing Masada.
- The many tears shed while saying goodbye to each other, and especially to our beloved chaperones, at the airport.

These moments listed were just a fraction of the incredible Israel experience, and do not even express the unforgettable memories and friendships that were made. This trip was a once in a lifetime experience that will forever be reminisced about amongst the Izzy ‘23 members. We are privileged that this trip has been sponsored by the late Aghajan & Malekeh Nassimi.

**Also a big thank you to the organizers of this trip: Yossi and Estherica Nassimi, and Jonathan Zar.**







# COMMUNITY BAR MITZVAH IN JERUSALEM

JULY 2, 2023 - TAMUZ 13, 5783





# RECAP OF THE 2023 UMJCA OLYMPIC GAMES



The 2nd Annual UMJCA Olympics has once again exceeded expectations, bringing together over 350 talented athletes across more than 15 sports for both men and women. This year's event spanned three exciting months, showcasing the dedication and skill of our community members.

The UMJCA Olympics continues to be a shining example of unity and sportsmanship within our community. On July 23rd, the Shaare Shalom gym was the epicenter of excitement as athletes gathered for the medal ceremony, marking a moment of celebration and pride for all participants. Beyond the medals and competition, this event reinforces the bonds of camaraderie and friendship among participants, leaving a lasting impact on our community.

One standout event was the Celebrity dodgeball game between the Central and Synagogue Boards, which added an extra layer of fun and friendly competition, further uniting our community. With the success of the 2nd Annual UMJCA Olympics, we eagerly anticipate an even larger turnout for the 2024 UMJCA Olympic Games. Together, we continue to prove that our community is stronger when we come together in the spirit of competition and togetherness.

*The UMJCA Olympic Committee  
Summited by Michael Liuim & Rodney Nassimian*

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2023 GOLD MEDALISTS!

**3-PT Shootout (Men's):**  
Tyler Zar

**3-PT Shootout (Women's):**  
Sophia Hajibai

**Basketball (Men's):**  
Byron Azizi, Joe Gohari, Daniel Levian

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

**Dodgeball (Men's):**  
Josh Bassaly, Ethan Bessaleli, Eric Eliassi, Marc Enayatian,  
Joseph Mayer, Marc Namdar, Tyler Rafinia



**Dodgeball (Women's):**

Noga Arjang, Sophie Hajibay, Lauren Hakimi, Abby Ijadi, Shirel Kashimallak, Caitlin Kohanim, Julia Kohanim, Lauren Namdar

**Ultimate Frisbee:**

Josh Ebrani, Aidan Hakimian, Ryder Hakimian, Toby Nabavian, Noah Namdar, Michael Sabzevari

**Soccer (Men's):**

Jacob Cohen, Damien Chafe, Jonathan Erfanian, Dan Gorjian, Andrew Hakimian, Charlie Hakimi, Julien Namdar, Toby Nabavian, Giacobbe Nouriely, Tanner Zar

**Flag Football:**

Byron Azizi, Charlie Hakimi, Ben Azizi, Brandon Djourabchi, Justin Kamali, Jonny Rahimi

**Spikeball:**

Eric Eliassi, Gavin Hakimian

**Tennis (Men's):**

David Karimzadeh

**Tennis (Women's):**

Sharon Hackman, Nicole Idelson

**Volleyball (Men's):**

Leo Hakimian, Manuel Hakimian, Beckett Hakimi, Kyle Hakimi, Warren Kalaty, Joseph Mayer, Benet Rahmanim

**Volleyball (Women's):**

Noga Arjang, Lea Bassali, Kendall Hakimi, Claire Kamali, Charlotte Kamali, Caitlin Kohanim

*On behalf of all Community Members & Olympians, the Megillah Editorial Staff extends a big thank you to the organizers and commissioners of the 2023 UMJCA Olympics.*



*Pictured from left to right: Rodney Nassimian, Bob Kamali, Farshad Kalaty, Simon Eliassi, Michael Liuim, Aaron Kamali, Michael Kamali (Not Pictured)*



# MASHADI MAGIC

2023 - 5783

## Season Recap

*Pierce Hakimian*

Being a player on the Mashadi Magic basketball team this past season will forever be one of my best memories. Despite the fact that we didn't win the championship this year, and I had to miss Sunday football to run suicides in the 54 gym all day. I am beyond happy with the experience I got out of being a member of the Mashadi Magic basketball team. From all the team dinners, the times we would embarrass other teams in their own gyms, or even the roaring crowds we had at all the home games. I am truly grateful for what the community has built for us. I was most grateful for the family that was built among the team.

Between all the coaches and all my teammates, the struggles, tears, laughs, and smiles, we shared chasing that same goal. I would not trade that for any time in the world. Now that I graduated high school, I can no longer be on the team but I know I could still help my brothers reach their goal by supporting them in the crowds for years to come.

***On behalf of the entire team, I'd like to thank our amazing coaching staff: Michael Liuim, Alec Namdar, Rabbi Eli Livian and David Hakimian***

Thank you for dedicating your time and energy to coach us and help us be the best team possible:



## Coach's Year-End Report

*Michael Liuim*

It is a true honor to serve as a coach for the 22/23 Mashadi Magic team. I'd like to thank my fellow coaches on the staff including: Alec Namdar, Rabbi Eli Livian, and David Hakimian, who came to each and every practice and game in hopes of not just winning but having our youth improve as basketball players and as individuals. Mashadi Magic is known as the high school basketball team representing our community, but to the members of the team, it's much more than that. It is a family. A family that strives through hard work and devotion to their fellow "brothers" and community members. The players know that when they are on the court, they are playing for the name on the front of the jersey, not the back. They also know that a huge part of this team and its decades of success is the fans. We are truly grateful that through thick or thin, our fans continuously show up and make sure their presence is recognized. Even though we did not reach our goal, we are still proud of the growth displayed by the individuals on the team.

We would like to thank our seniors this season for taking part in the journey and wish them all the best throughout their new endeavors. For the upcoming 23/24 season, the expectations are high as we strive to deliver another championship trophy to this community in 2024.

# MYC SUMMMER TRIP: CAMP SENECA

SEPTEMBER 2023 - ELUL 5783







# MASHADI SENIOR CLUB GRAND REOPENING & SUMMER PICNIC



# Keeping Our Children Safe

Ann Donnelly, Patrick Ryder

Summary of UMJCA Sisterhood & Central Board Presentation regarding Social Media and Substance Abuse at Shaare Shalom Synagogue, featuring District Attorney Ann Donnelly and Nassau County Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder.



Please scan the QR code below to watch this informational session on YouTube.



## General Notes:

- Maintain your kids trust & strive for an open line of communication.
- Tell your children “I will always be here for you... come to me if you EVER have a problem”.
- Take the time to learn about your kids' lives. There is no replacement for this.

## Social Media Notes:

- Never share personal info on social media (full name, address, etc.).
- Avoid talking to strangers online: watch 'phishing'/scams/sexual predators (up to 1 in 4 teens get a "sext" from a stranger).
- Watch for underage kids downloading Tinder, Bumble, Monkey, Grinder, etc.
- Over 50% of teens have been cyber bullied online.
- Instagram is damaging to girls' mental health (33% of users have reported issues).

## Social Media Suggestions:

- SET EXPECTATIONS or limits on screen time for kids.
- Discreetly look through devices for apps and browsing history for younger kids.
- Use Instagram's "family center" to see who young kids are following (Snapchat has a similar family center).
- Use Tiktok's restricted mode for young kids (search in settings).
- Use a common charging area for night.
- Model good behavior in front of your kids.
- Set all profiles to PRIVATE.
- Establish consequences with your kids.
- Safety tip for kids on social media: STOP then send on social media (study content, think about how people will react, etc.).

## Police Notes/Tips:

- 300 overdoses reported in Nassau, age 16-28 (heroin, cocaine, marijuana with fentanyl), and over 600 DWIs.
- Tell your kids NOT to engage in aggressive action with other drivers.
- Ask your kids to use an Uber home if they drink.
- Download and track children with apps like Life 360.
- Threatening schools (bombing, shooting) is criminal: Warn your children.

## Liabilities:

- Hosting laws: you are responsible for damages/loss of life due to drinking at your house.
- Meeting strangers on apps is a huge risk: If they're under 18, feeding them alcohol or even picking them up is criminal.
- Minors drinking in the home: 'endangering welfare' and 'civil liabilities' apply, even if you're on vacation and are not aware.
- If kids won't stop drinking on your premises, you are legally obligated to call the police.
- Synagogues are liable for excessive drinking and damages off premises.
- Kids see the fathers drinking and look to emulate.

## Megillah is Looking to Hire a New **Fake Editor!**

Our former Fake Editor has been fired as he decided to go on strike. We are now seeking a replacement.

If you are interested in applying for the role, please email [hr@mashadiyouth.org](mailto:hr@mashadiyouth.org).

# Thank You to Our Generous Sponsors:

The Publication of "Megillah" is made possible by the generous contributions of our supporters.

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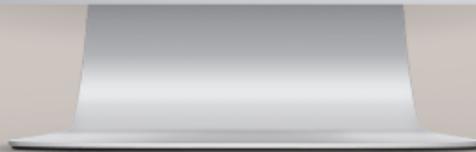


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