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Haaretz Magazine,
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ISRAEL'S LEADING DAILY NEWSPAPER

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IRAN FIRES 180 MISSILES AT ISRAELI POPULATION CENTERS

Tel Aviv building takes direct hit, other damage reported; sirens send people into shelters across country; Israel vows Iran will pay

Yaniv Kubovich,
Bar Peleg, Ben Samuels
and Reuters

Iran launched a barrage of 180 missiles at Israel on Tuesday night, the IDF said. The Iranian response came in response to Israel's offensive actions against Hezbollah in Lebanon, and were a sharp escalation in the years-long animosity between Israel and Iran.

The orange glow of missiles streaked across Israel's night sky as air raid sirens sounded and millions of residents scrambled into bomb shelters. Israel vowed retaliation for Iran's missile

barrage, which it said had caused only a few injuries. Rescue services say two people were lightly wounded in Tel Aviv, while others were injured while making their way to shelter.

A building in Tel Aviv took a direct hit, and there were reports of hits in central Israel, the Negev, and the Sharon region.

Sirens sounded across the country, including in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, where loud explosions were heard.

Following the barrage, IDF Spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said

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Iranian missile fire over central Israel on Tuesday evening.

Ilan Assayag

Six killed, 10 wounded in shooting attack in Jaffa

Josh Breiner

Six people were killed and 10 others were wounded in a shooting attack in Jaffa, part of Tel Aviv, on Tuesday, emergency services reported. Five of those wounded are in serious condition, and a child was lightly wounded.

Two assailants opened fire toward the light rail station on Jerusalem Boulevard and were shot dead by a passerby and a security guard who were in the area, police said. Large police and IDF anti-terror unit forces were scanning the area.

Tel Aviv district commander Haim Sargrof said that the two assailants were Mohammed Khalef Safer Regev and Hassan Mohammed Hassan Tamimi, both in their twenties from the city of Hebron in the West Bank. They did not have a permit to be in Israel.

An eyewitness who was at the scene of the attack said:

See JAFFA, Page 2

After an unprecedented Iranian attack, we are in a regional war

Analysis Amos Harel

After nearly a year of fighting, as of Tuesday evening Israel is involved in a regional war. In the wake of the events of the past two weeks between Israel and Hezbollah, Iran has inserted itself into the heart of the conflict by launching a massive, unprecedented missile attack on Israeli soil. Accordingly, a fierce Israeli reprisal is expected.

Amazingly, the Iranian attack caused no serious

casualties, although many homes in the center of the country were damaged from shrapnel, some of it from interceptor missiles. After a little more than an hour, the Home Front Command authorized civilians to leave their protected spaces.

The initial assessment is that Iran launched about 180 ballistic missiles at Israel, most of which were intercepted or landed in open areas. That is about half the

number of projectiles Iran fired in its April attack, but this time the proportion of ballistic missiles was greater and, as a result, so was the damage caused.

Iran presumably analyzed the results of the previous attack and learned lessons from it. Nevertheless, it did not effectively penetrate Israeli regional air defenses.

Israeli, especially those living in the center of the country, have never faced an attack on this scale. Nevertheless, civilians demonstrated a high level of personal discipline while the

air force and the air defense system saw off the attack with aplomb, with the help of the United States. The attack was supposed to target several military and security installations, including air force bases, but it was also intended to hit civilian areas and cause deaths and terrorize the population.

The latest escalation puts all the sides to the conflict in an entirely different situation, in which Israel's war with Hamas and even with Hezbollah are relegated to

See REGIONAL, Page 6

May this year and its troubles soon be over Editorial Page 11

War, grief and ideological divides as U.S. rabbis prepare sermons



A man blowing a shofar for Rosh Hashanah.

Ariel Schallit / AP

Etan Nechin

NEW YORK – With the High Holy Days coinciding with the one-year anniversary of the October 7 massacre, the challenge of speaking to the moment becomes especially daunting for U.S. rabbis this year as their congregations

grapple with grief, uncertainty and anxiety.

In their Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur sermons, rabbis of all denominations will be focusing on the themes of remembrance, resilience and Jewish unity, as they seek to guide their congregations through these

tumultuous times

We asked six New York rabbis, the spiritual leaders of both small and large congregations, how they plan to address the year that has pushed Israel to the brink, and the tensions the war and other issues have raised among their congregants...

'Almost no words'

Prospect Heights Shul Rabbi Jonathan Leener says he finds himself in the unusual position of being at a loss for words this year. Therefore, he will be drawing inspiration from the sounds of the shofar – the ram's horn that is blown in synagogues at this time of year.

"The shofar, at its core, produces sounds that are intended to be cries and wailing," says Leener. "Rabbis even debate what type of crying the sound represents: is it wailing or rapid sobbing? Ultimately, they agree it's a sound of grief and trauma. Relating to that this year, out of all years, is powerful."

"There are almost no words to express the grief the Jewish people have experienced this year. The shofar is an incredible instrument because it can encapsulate that feeling in a way that words can't."

Leener wants to believe that the Jewish New Year might also symbolize a new

See RABBIS, Page 4

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LIVE IN ISRAEL, STUDY IN ENGLISH

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On behalf of the students and staff of the Raphael Recanati International School, we wish you a year of peace, health and fulfillment

SHANA TOVA

Iran's dilemma: Preventing collapse of its 'ring of fire'

Iran's firing on Israel violated a strategic principle, after Nasrallah miscalculated in managing his conflict with Israel

Analysis Zvi Bar'el

"Today we, members of the resistance, its sons and daughters throughout the generations, are faced with one key task," Ibrahim Al Amine, editor of the Lebanese newspaper Al-Akbar, wrote on Monday.

"This task is to preserve the resistance and protect it from all evils, to be willing to pay the heaviest price to protect the idea that stands at its basis and its historic values," Al Amine, who was very close to former Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and faithfully reflects his views, continued. "There is no thinking person on earth with whom it's possible to discuss and negotiate over what is termed an arrangement, an agreement or rational according to the criminal West."

Al Amine isn't part of Hezbollah's military or managerial structure, and he doesn't offer ideas on how it should act or what methods it should use to continue the resistance. What concerns him is the idea itself – the resistance. This is the idea around which Hezbollah arose, on which it built its legitimacy and in whose name it accumulated its enormous political and military power, held Lebanon by the throat and created a state within a state.

Resistance is a unifying idea that stands outside of local Lebanese politics or management of the war with Israel. It's a mobilizing idea that calls on all the "oppressed of the world" to rebel not only against the Israeli occupation, but also against the imperialist West and colonialism in general so as to bring new justice to the world. It's the idea that the Islamic Revolution sought to market to the entire world, and first of all to the Muslim world.

But this unifying idea can't exist only in theory. To produce benefits, it must exist in concrete reality. That requires it to navigate through political and economic minefields and maneuver among ideological rivals.

In this sense, Nasrallah was the Iranian protégé who most correctly interpreted the way the ideological struggle should be conducted. He didn't make do with leading a Shi'ite struggle in Lebanon and with striving to achieve distributive justice, jobs, government funding and better health and education systems for its Shi'ite citizens. Nor did he make do with creating an Iranian bastion in Lebanon. He saw himself as an Arab leader rather than just a Lebanese Shi'ite leader. But it's precisely this image that trapped him in unresolvable contradictions.

When the Arab Spring revolutions erupted in Tunisia and Egypt, Nasrallah sided with the demonstrators. In a speech he gave on February 7, 2011, he said, "These protests represent the poor, the free people and those who seek freedom, those who reject the humiliation and dishonor from which this Egyptian nation suffered because the regime subordinated itself to the wishes of America and Israel."

Nasrallah was aware of the gap between Iran's megalomaniac idea of exporting its "Islamic" – that is, Shi'ite – revolution and the fact that the Shi'ite community constitutes just 12 percent of the Arab world, as well as

the ancient conflict between Sunni and Shi'ite Islam. He therefore understood that marketing a Shi'ite revolution to the Sunni world would require global ideals that "bypassed" Shi'ism. Only thus could he increase the number of people subscribing to the revolution.

Yet the idea he promoted of the Arab nation fighting against its oppressors was dealt a shattering blow when the civil uprising in Syria began. Nasrallah stood squarely alongside the Assad regime. He sent in troops who participated in the uprising's brutal repression and the slaughter of thousands of Syrian civilians. The Arab flag he raised over the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia became an instrument of murder in Syria.

Nasrallah acted similarly with regard to the Palestinian problem, which he adopted as a lever with which to promote his status as a regional leader. But most Palestinians are Sunni. Most of them didn't see Nasrallah (or Iran) as being someone who would save them from the occupation, or even as someone who would give Palestinians living in Lebanon a better life. Nasrallah opposed giving equal rights to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, which would have allowed them to engage in all the professions reserved for Lebanese citizens, to buy property or to obtain citizenship.

To justify this position, he argued that giving the Palestinians Lebanese citizenship and enabling them to assimilate in the country would make the refugee problem disappear, and with it the Palestinian problem. But the real reason was that the Lebanese, including the Shi'ites, remain deeply traumatized by the period when Palestinian organizations took over Lebanon after being expelled from Jordan in September 1970.



A rally commemorating Nasrallah in Iran this week.

Ushid Salemi/AP

The Palestinians set up a state within a state in southern Lebanon and western Beirut, and they terrorized the Lebanese, especially in southern Lebanon. The stories of thefts, looted homes, raped women, murders and the seizure of Lebanese assets left historical scars that Nasrallah couldn't ignore. The result was a contradiction. He fought for Palestine's independence outside Lebanon's borders while oppressing Palestinians within them.

But he also had trouble realizing his ambition to be seen as an authentic Lebanese leader who was fighting for Lebanon. He struggled even though he claimed full credit for liberating the country from Israeli occupation following Israel's unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000. He leveraged that event to legitimize the organization's

retention of its arms "until the Lebanese army is able to defend the homeland by itself," as he put it.

Nasrallah was seen as the person who destroyed the country's fragile democratic structure, dismantled its social foundations and dragged it time after time into wars that most Lebanese opposed. He accused anyone who criticized the idea of the "resistance" of betraying the country. He forced Lebanese leaders to affirm the government's commitment to "the resistance" – and, in consequence, to Hezbollah's right to bear arms in order to implement this idea, in defiance of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

Yet when Hezbollah's interests required it, Nasrallah could also forge unofficial agreements with Israel. That was the case when he accepted the so-called Blue Line as the land border between the countries after the Second Lebanon War of 2006. Likewise, he accepted an agreement on the maritime border that divided undersea gas reserves between the countries.

His policy of a "retaliation equation," which char-

acterized most of the current war, also rested on an unofficial agreement, alongside his condition that Hezbollah would cease its fire only when the war in the Gaza Strip ended. Without any written agreement, Nasrallah and Israel, by mutual consent, maintained a military "arrangement."

There is no organization or party anywhere in the world that isn't bound by internal or external limitations stemming from its vision and interests and from the fact that it must live in harmony with its own principles, declared Naim Qassem, Nasrallah's deputy and a candidate to replace him after his death, in his book "Hizbullah: The Story from Within" (Saqi Books, 2005).

This compromise between interests and vision, which required Hezbollah to adapt itself to Lebanon's politics and its complex communal structure, is also the foundation of Iranian policy. It is the basis for its idea of the so-called axis of resistance, which subsequently became "the ring of fire."

Throughout the war that began on October 7, Iran has insisted it is not involved

militarily and that every organization in this "ring of fire" must act according to its own decisions, based on the circumstances in the country where it is based. Nevertheless, this independence was limited.

For instance, Iran demanded that the Shi'ite militias in Iraq enjoying its patronage take the Iraqi government's problems into account and let it conclude negotiations on the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq by refraining from causing a conflict with America that would lead to airstrikes on the militias' bases and give America an excuse to retain a military presence in the country. Iran also sought to set the parameters of the conflict with Israel, with the guiding principle being to prevent it from expanding into an all-out war.

But Nasrallah pulled the rope of independence too far, apparently trusting his own ability to read Israel's political and social map and his many years of experience in managing conflicts with it. Unfortunately, the bastards changed the rules, to quote a saying attributed to former U.S. Vice President

Spiro Agnew. And Nasrallah – the spearhead of the axis of resistance, the leader who was supposed to know better than anyone else how to reconcile between interests and the vision – missed his exit. Thus, he left Iran with a tough strategic dilemma that had tried to avoid.

In the end, Iran decided to deviate from the strategic principle that led it to refrain from getting involved in the war. As of the writing of this article, it wasn't clear whether there would be more missile fire on Israel Tuesday night or if the event was over. Nevertheless, Iran will now have to answer the question of where the ring of fire is headed and what will happen to the resistance axis following the resounding collapse of the cornerstone on which it was built.

Here, a note of caution is necessary. Hezbollah hasn't disappeared. Its capabilities, even if eroded, remain great. They still pose a threat to Israel, and not only to it. Hezbollah will continue being a dominant player in Lebanon. Even if it doesn't turn its weapons on Israel, it will continue protecting Iran's diplomatic interests in that country. The same goes for the Shi'ite militias that form the basis of Iranian influence in Iraq.

Nevertheless, the strategy of the ring of fire, which was supposed to protect Iran against attack, will need to be reconsidered. The most urgent tasks will be to preserve the status of Iran's proxies, especially in Lebanon and Iraq (Yemen is a special case), as the pillars of Iran's political influence in those countries and, no less, as its "gunships."

If a civil uprising takes place in Lebanon against Hezbollah, it might also spur Iraqis to rise up against the pro-Iranian militias, which have already become a target for harsh public criticism in recent years. More importantly, Iran itself is now standing at the front and facing direct threats, both American and Israeli, at a time when its proxies' effectiveness at forestalling such attacks has been dramatically eroded.

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JAFFA

Continued from page 1

An eyewitness who was at the scene of the attack said: "I saw a terrorist shoot a girl who was on the floor and another girl, then I saw the terrorist shoot a man on a bicycle who fell to the floor, but I don't think he wasn't hurt. At that moment a civilian arrived with a gun and shot the terrorist."

Another eyewitness who was at a synagogue at the

time of the attack said that he heard shots from an automatic weapon. "Among the worshippers were medics who volunteered at the MDA. We treated a man who was wounded in the synagogue and then ran to the street to help others who were wounded," he said.

Another eyewitness who spoke to Haaretz said that he heard gunshots when he was in a store near the scene of the attack, and went out into the street to help administer first aid. "There was an injured girl on the road, there were already several peo-

ple taking care of her, and then there were more shots from nearby," he said. "We dragged the injured woman to a nearby restaurant's kitchen and blocked the door with a heavy object. I put a tourniquet on her."

He added that after about 15 minutes security forces arrived in large numbers and began knocking on the door, and that the injured woman was conscious when she was taken to receive further treatment.

Israel's National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir arrived at the scene

of the attack, and spoke of the mosque that is located near the scene of the attack, where several people in attendance were detained by police. "If it turns out that there is a connection to the mosque, things are clear – it should be closed and demolished," he said.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said that he will demand at tonight's cabinet discussion that the members of the terrorists' families be deported "tonight to Gaza" and that their homes be destroyed. "No High Court and no B'Tselem," he added.

IRAN

Continued from page 1

that Israel's air defenses had intercepted many of the incoming missiles, and that no further threats from Iran were detected at this stage.

National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said U.S. naval destroyers shot down Iranian missiles as well.

An Israeli source said after the attack that Iran will pay a heavy price. Iran's mission to the United Nations in New York posted on X: "Should the Zionist regime dare to respond or commit further acts of malevolence, a subsequent and crushing response will ensue."

The Iranian order to

launch missiles at Israel was made by Supreme Leader Khamenei, senior Iranian officials told Reuters.

Senior Iranian officials told Reuters that Tehran had informed Russia ahead of missile attacks on Israel. Shortly before the attack, a senior U.S. administration official warned that Iran was preparing to "imminently" launch a ballistic missile attack on Israel.

U.S. President Joe Biden ordered the U.S. military to aid Israel's defense and shoot down missiles targeting Israel. The White House said Tuesday night that Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee for president in next month's election, were monitoring the situation from the situation room, and were receiving



People sheltering during the Iranian strike. Ammar Awad/Reuters

regular updates from their national security teams.

Iran attack on Israel was a "legal, rational, legitimate response to the terrorist acts," Iran's mission to the United Nations in New York posted on X on Tuesday. "Should the

Zionist regime dare to respond or commit further acts of malevolence, a subsequent and crushing response will ensue. Regional states and the Zionists' supporters are advised to part ways with the regime," the mission wrote.

The UN Security Council is to convene Wednesday to discuss the Iranian attack against Israel.

Before the attack: IDF Spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said the Israeli army is "monitoring the threat from Iran" and that the threat could be on "large scale." Hagari said that if sirens sound, residents must enter shelters until the IDF announces they can leave.

Israel's airspace later reopened, the Israel Airports Authority said Tuesday night.

Brain strain

Yoana Gonen

Answers on page 6

- Who called for razing the wall around the Old City of Jerusalem immediately after the 1967 Six-Day War because "it's not Jewish" and "We want Jerusalem to be one big city"?
- Who is the youngest member of the current Knesset, born in 1992?
- Which Israeli politician was compelled to resign after it was reported that he had received \$453,000 from French industrialist Edouard Seroussi?
- Which U.S. president had the middle name of Gamaliel?
- What is a grenadier?
- What is the largest country that is named for

- a real person?
- In what realm does Kentucky hold a world record: pistols, corn, caves, bridges or chewing gum?
- In which novel does the protagonist travel from the mid-19th century to the year 802701?
- Which successful 1998 movie was based on Roderick Thorp's novel "Nothing Lasts Forever"?
- Which movie was the first directed by a woman to gross more than \$100 million at the box office?

This week, Israel laid its toughest traps yet against Iran – and U.S.

Analysis **Dahlia Scheindlin**

Merriam-Webster defines a trap as "a device for taking game or other animals, especially by springing shut suddenly" or "something by which one is caught or stopped unawares." But in the Middle East, "trapped" has a very different meaning. On October 7, Hamas trapped Israel, first by catching it unawares, then by giving it a terrible choice: Repel the attack and then give into Hamas' demands written in the blood of civilians and hostages, or succumb to a retaliatory rampage, committing alleged war crimes against Gazans, and wrecking Israel's remaining legitimacy along the way. It chose the latter.

Hezbollah trapped Israel too, by launching its offensive on October 8 and linking it to a cease-fire in Gaza, hoping to force Israel's hand. Hezbollah failed, but Israel was still caught between two poor choices (at least in the Israeli government's eyes), since Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu steadfastly refused to end the fighting in Gaza, yet Israel's north remains unlivable even now.

But the Middle East version of a trap doesn't catch or block its prey like the dictionary version. Rather, these are traps that force the subject into actions – one of two poor choices, or something else – with exceedingly dangerous ramifications.

Since September 17, the day of the pager attacks on thousands of Hezbollah operatives in Lebanon, Israel has begun laying traps of its own. But these are not truly against Hamas or Hezbollah, organizations that do not appear troubled by strategic dilemmas or statecraft.

As hybrid actors with military and political wings, both groups' leaders have seemed fully content prioritizing their religious-ideological revolutionary campaigns, rather than the banalities of governance, diplomacy or protecting their people. Both Hamas and Hezbollah chose actions guaranteed to sacrifice the civilians under their rule – knowing full well those actions would result in mass death, destruction and displacement. For fundamentalist non-state actors, that's not a surprise.

But this week, Israel laid its toughest traps yet against two sovereign states: Iran and the United States.

These countries now face tremendous dilemmas. Each is trapped between two highly fraught options, like sharp-toothed jaws closing around them. Their choices will determine the fate of the region both for the short term and for years to come.

Will Iran come unbound?

What are Iran's choices? One option is drawn from very recent history. In April, it broke new ground by firing directly at Israel for the first time, following Israel's high-level assassination of an Iranian Al Quds commander in Damascus. Iran's response fire was serious, but still tailored to head off the worst damage, prompting Israel to execute a tepid, minimal response and end the saga for a while.

On Tuesday night, Iran launched hundreds of missiles at Israel. The attack represented a buildup of pressure on Iran to respond to Israel's attacks: first, the assassination in late July (presumed to be by Israel) of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh, which happened in the most humiliating, symbolic manner: Haniyeh was blown up in Tehran after the inauguration of Iran's new president. Then Israel killed Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah.

But following the barrage on Tuesday, Iran can still choose to craft its response in a way that signals restraint. There would be plenty of reasons for that choice. A severe Iranian response raises the very plausible specter of a direct U.S. response to Iran – especially given all the forces America has been moving

into the region. Those forces, from warships to troops, have likely contributed to Iran's restraint in the previous rounds. The threat of American military involvement is not theoretical.

An Iranian escalation could expose the flaws of its April response, when it mostly failed even in its calibrated aims of striking Israel. Who wants to be exposed for military weakness twice, in a much bigger theater of war? And if the new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, is aiming for a more conciliatory posture with the West, perhaps hoping to improve Iran's economic hardship due to international sanctions, a regional conflagration around Iran won't help.

But if Israelis are feeling complacent – either the public or freshly swaggering officials – they need to remember all the reasons why Iran might very well look to take revenge. The combined "assassination package" of Haniyeh and Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah might be too much to let go unanswered.

Ronen Bergman, Israel's top military and intelligence correspondent for Yedioth Ahronoth and The New York Times, wrote in Yedioth that Nasrallah was "an equal friend among equals, and maybe even more equal, [and] for the members of the senior Iranian leadership and in the Axis of Resistance, it will be very hard to believe that Iran would not respond." Just think of Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich in Israel, and you can probably imagine how hard-line Revolutionary Guards figures would like Iran to react. Bergman reported that Israeli officials are already counting down to such a response.

When trapped by two bad options, but spurred to action, the actor in the trap can also seek a third way out. Back in January, Ali Vaez, the Iran project director of the International Crisis Group, wrote in Foreign Affairs that the war was likely to accelerate Iran's nuclear ambitions. If the country is "not strong enough to go on a real offensive," he wrote, Tehran might worry that the conflict makes it look weak. And in that case, "Tehran could make a final dash for the ultimate deterrent: nuclear weapons." How much weaker does Iran look after failing to prevent Israeli intelligence from penetrating Tehran and taking out one of its top proxy partners?

The American factor

Of course, Iran's decision will be powerfully influenced by the mind of one man: U.S. President Joe Biden. But Netanyahu has put Israel's greatest benefactor into a trap, or a vise of sorts, as well.

Up to now, Israel didn't have to work very hard for the U.S.' stalwart backing. Since Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, the United States has practically flooded Israel with an astonishing level of financial aid, arms and near-hermetic political cover in the international arena, for a war that has long since ceased to be about defense. By the spring, Israel was pushing the political boundaries and crossing American red lines, such as ducking a hostage release-cease-fire agreement and marching into Rafah.

The U.S. began to feel hamstrung: even crumbs of pressure such as sanctioning a few individual settlers or delaying a weapons shipment generated huge domestic controversies and waves of criticism from the American right, which viewed any deviation from complete devotion to the Israeli government as a total betrayal. American progressives and left-wingers, meanwhile, worried that America's beefed-up military presence in the region may have deterred Iran, but also emboldened Israel's dizzying escalation too by imparting a sense of blank-check impunity.

Now, tough competing

pressures on Biden are evolving into a full-out trap. The pager attacks and assassination of Nasrallah have been accompanied by an unrelenting wave of bombings throughout Lebanon, reaching into Yemen and Iraq, in response to strikes from militias in those countries – where the Americans are already engaged militarily, and have been attacked by the same Iranian proxy groups attacking Israel.

The war has now escalated to full-on attacks on Israel, and Israel has promised a harsh response. The U.S. has already helped intercept Iran's attack, and every hour pulls the U.S. closer to joining Israeli attacks; it can hardly stand by. If it did, the damage to America's global

reputation would be bad – but particularly among its Middle East allies. Some are already wary that the U.S. is no great protector. And if the Americans had any deterrence power at all with Israel, that would be lost.

And if the U.S. does intervene in a full-blown regional escalation, whether to save Israel or protect its own interests? The risks are tremendous. It might hope it can keep such a war, or its own role, limited, but the ingredients for a long war are there – something few Americans will want. U.S. forces could come under further attack in Iraq and the Houthi confrontations will escalate. Russia could beef up its support for Iran, edging the region

toward a direct U.S.-Russia confrontation – almost unimaginable since the Cold War, and unthinkable even in Ukraine.

It is impossible to overstate the dangers of those scenarios. But possibly the biggest danger of all is political. Both U.S. options in the event of a big war are bad for Biden – a trap – and, therefore, bad for Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential candidate. Ergo, they would be good for Donald Trump.

The one left standing

If Netanyahu has successfully trapped both Iran and the U.S., it's not hard to see why. He has long wished for a big military escalation



A demonstrator raising a Palestinian flag and a poster bearing pictures of Ismail Haniyeh, left, and Hassan Nasrallah, in Rabat, Morocco, Saturday.

with Iran that would force the Americans to join, and perhaps to attack Iran directly. The circumstances are ripening in a way they never have before.

And if a Democratic

president won't do it, Netanyahu clearly hopes a future President Trump will. Trump of course is a fair-weather, self-serving friend who might not want to fight Israel's wars. But Netan-

yahu might be waiting for Trump's entourage of advisers who are also Bibi's allies – the type that would fill a hall when Netanyahu speaks, and cheer for him from the bleachers.

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Year of despair ends with one ray of hope: Public still rejects Netanyahu government

Analysis Noa Landau

The traditional Rosh Hashanah text messages and WhatsApps, with the hearts and the smileys, are more irritating than ever. The situation has never been as frightening and depressing, in every possible sphere. On the eve of the Jewish New Year, 5785, Israel is in a regional war that's only escalating, with an abandoned north, masses of people evacuated from their homes and 101 hostages still in Gaza. As of now the government is intensifying the military activities without any foreseeable intention to leverage them into a long-term diplomatic process.

The right is pushing to build settlements in the occupied territory in the Gaza Strip and even in South Lebanon (in the discussion groups on the subject I followed a stormy discussion in amazement: Should we aspire to have the Israeli occupation reach the Litani River, for security reasons, or the Euphrates, for biblical reasons?).

When a siren is heard, there's no way of knowing if the missile will come from Gaza, from Lebanon, from Iran or "only" from Yemen. The secular community will continue to be the "silver platter" sacrificing themselves for the ultra-Orthodox, and the economy is on the way to crashing with a finance minister whose work plan is to observe the 613 Torah commandments,

with the book "The Lazy Investor" on his desk. But hey, at least he's reading a book.

In the midst of all that, the judicial coup hasn't stopped for a moment. Netanyahu's honey machine, with the help of useful idiots, reprimands anyone who dares to demonstrate against him, claiming that this is the time for unity and embracing, but at the same time his poison machine continues to trample and incite. Between additional stringencies in the instructions of the Home Front Command and an announcement by the Israel Defense Forces spokesman, it was hard to devote proper attention to the report Monday about the retirement ceremony of acting Supreme Court President Uzi Vogelmann, a retiree that leaves the court with a shorthanded panel of 12 justices and with another acting president, due to the insistence of Justice Minister Yariv Levin to continue to crush the system of the rule of law.

"The significance of a weakened court due to its dilution is governance without oversight, a blow to human and civil rights and the promotion of cronies, inequality in participation in the burden on the one hand, and benefiting from the country's resources on the other [a reference to the failure to draft young ultra-Orthodox men] – and government corruption," warned Attor-



Anti-government protesters in Tel Aviv.

ney General Gali Baharav-Miara at the ceremony. It's a shame that they didn't broadcast her speech with the same degree of urgency with which they break into broadcasts with the filmed announcements of the IDF spokesman. Maybe someone would have listened.

Under such circumstances, the only suitable cliché is "May the year and its curses end," if you're really insist on giving a blessing. But if you're momentarily afflicted by "poisonous positivity" – the irritating tendency to

insist on finding a positive side for everything – you should look at the latest poll of Knesset seats that was publicized this week on Channel 12 News. Although the largest party was Likud with 25 seats, the seats that were added to it are taken from the realms of National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. In terms of the "blocs," the opposition parties get 71 seats, and the coalition party 49 (and for lovers of the "apartheid poll": In this situation, the opposition can form a nar-

row government of 61 seats even without the Arab parties Hadash-Ta'al and the United Arab List). If Naftali Bennett joins the race, the opposition reaches 74 seats and the coalition 46.

With or without Gideon Sa'ar, with or without the assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, with or without exploding beepers – the basic camps don't change in essence: There are those in favor of Netanyahu and there are those who are against him, in a more consistent manner.

During the latest election round that led to many of the disasters I've described, the numbers, what in the United States is called the popular vote, were 2,360,793 for the Bibi bloc and 2,330,449 for the anti-Bibi bloc. A gap of 30,344 votes, which led to a crash of the electoral threshold. There's no reason to glorify Netanyahu as an undefeated genius. Even during a week when Sa'ar was recruited and Nasrallah was assassinated. He was defeated once, not so long ago, and that could happen again.

Tomer Appelbaum

Ruhama lost faith in gov't but still believes her niece will return

Ofer Aderet

"I never believed we would reach this point. No way. I had a feeling that things were moving forward," says Prof. Ruhama Elbag, the aunt of 19-year-old IDF spotter Liri Elbag, who was kidnapped by Hamas to Gaza from the Nahal Oz military base on October 7.

Elbag, a scholar of Israeli literature, holds up a picture of her with her niece, the daughter of her younger brother Eli, taken last Sukkot Eve, "just a week before the disaster," she recalls. She remembers having an "intuition," as she puts it, that it was necessary to finalize the deals early on to avoid being dragged into a situation like today's. "I had hoped it would happen before the ground invasion, before the killing, the destruction, and the revenge. Back then, I thought we wouldn't face more deaths of hostages and soldiers."

"I think the government, and the person leading it – whose trustworthiness is certainly not the strong suit of his deceitful personality – are doing nothing, and none of them really care about the lives of the hostages or our lives here," Elbag added. Her criticism isn't only aimed at the government but also at others, like those who threw eggs at her brother Eli this week. "There is a cult of people who immediately label anyone who isn't a declared 'Bibist' as a leftist, a Bibi-hater," she says. To them, she adds, "anyone who op-

poses any action of the devil is interpreted as opposing the rule of the king."

"Liri is a young woman full of life and vitality. She had just started her military service and had been at Nahal Oz for only one day. She was planning to attend an officer training course and later move to Paris to study interior design. She has a boyfriend. She was at the beginning of her life, and suddenly... it was cut short," she recounts. "There is a deep sense of sorrow, but I believe she will come home, though I'm a bit pessimistic about the timing. I used to say it would happen by Hanukkah, or by Tu B'Shvat... She knows we're waiting for her, and though her family is desperate, we're united in the effort to bring her back."

Alongside the photo of herself with Liri, Elbag requested to also share a painting created by her friend Michal Rotman Laor. "This special painting was born out of our conversations. Despair and melancholy accompany nearly every discussion, and I keep asking her how one lives in this hell, in the gloom, underground, in dark tunnels, within the blackness," Elbag explains. "One day she surprised me with this painting, which reflects the feeling of two parallel worlds. The sky, though sad, is still blue, with a small flower, and beneath it—the damp, dark world, a maze from which there seems to be no escape, not just physically but emotionally as well."



Elbag speaking at a protest in Tel Aviv, in May.

Hadas Parush

Student who said 'Zionists don't deserve to live' sues Columbia U.

Etan Nechin

A Columbia University student who was suspended in the spring after a video surfaced of him saying "Zionists don't deserve to live" has filed a lawsuit against the university.

In the lawsuit filed on September 27 in New York, Khy-

mani James charges that he was denied due process and fair treatment in violation of university policy and that the decision to suspend him was driven by media pressure.

He claims in the lawsuit that he was targeted by Columbia because he is a Black, pro-Palestinian student and that the decision to suspend

him "inflamed the hatred" against him. He also alleges that the university "privileges a class of self-described 'Zionist Jewish' people over everyone on campus."

Representing James in the lawsuit is Jonathan Wallace, an attorney who defended Mohamed Abdou, the professor fired by Columbia for

voicing support for the October 7 Hamas attack.

James was a prominent leader of the Columbia "Gaza encampment," set up in April, which tried to pressure the university into divesting from Israel and cutting its ties with Tel Aviv University. Columbia students were the first in the country to set up

an encampment.

The letter notifying James of his suspension cites a widely publicized incident on campus, in which he organized a human chain to block Zionist students from accessing the lawn where the encampment was set up.

According to a recent report by the university's

antisemitism taskforce, the encampment targeted Jewish students.

James is seeking damages and a court declaration clarifying that his rights were violated.

Asked for a response, a Columbia spokesperson said the university will not comment on pending litigation.

RABBIS

Continued from page 1

page for the 100 or so Israeli hostages still being held in Gaza.

"Rosh Hashanah has themes of hope and miracles, even though it is also seen as Yom HaDin – the Day of Judgment – when life and death hang in the balance," he says. "In the Talmud, it mentions that Joseph was liberated from his Egyptian prison on Rosh Hashanah, and it discusses how future redemptions will also occur during this time. I find that profound, given the current state of the hostages, and it evokes a sense of hope."

"We have a history of being imprisoned without any sense of light, but redemption comes," Leener says. "On this day, Joseph was freed, and the Torah readings focus on miracles and the most unexpected things happening. Sarah, who was barren, discovers she can have a child, and the same with Hannah. Drawing on these moments of inspiration can uplift people. The High Holy Days, like life, are a mix of emotions filled with paradoxes, and owning that is important."

'Be visible, proud Jews'

It's been a busy year for Congregation Beth Elohim's senior rabbi, Rachel Timoner. She has spoken in vigils commemorating the October 7 victims, advocated for a hostage deal and called for an end to the war.

Her message in her High Holy Days sermon will focus on "how I think we should approach being Jews in the coming year," she says.

"I want to encourage my community to be visible, proud Jews, standing by the values we hold dear. We should be outspoken, seen and heard, making sure our values are present in our communities, in our larger cities, in our neighborhoods, and in every environment we

live and work in."

To prevent divisions within her own congregation spinning out of control this past year, Timoner has been holding "listening circles," where members can speak to one another civilly rather than shouting at each other.

"We're really focused on creating an environment where we grow the muscle of being able to be with each other, even across our differences," she says. "We don't need to agree on everything to be a community. We can tolerate a range of perspectives – and I believe that for the Jewish future, it's essential that we learn how to strengthen that ability."

'Sober perspective'

Anshe Chesed spiritual leader Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky says he had a much clearer sense of what needed to be said last year, when hundreds of thousands of Israelis had taken to the streets to protest their extremist government's assault on democracy.

His main message to his congregation this year will be urging them to combat the inclination to hate and dehumanize. "There's a line from Pirkei Avot: 'In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man' – which feels particularly relevant now," he says. "We have real enemies, but we must do so without sinking into hatred. If we become racist or violent, we lose part of our humanity."

Kalmanofsky will also be addressing rising antisemitism in the United States. "It didn't take much to stir up anti-Israel sentiment that often abuts antisemitism," he says. "There's a segment of the population that seems to take a certain satisfaction in Jewish suffering. That's real. But my question is: What kind of people do we become in response?"

Within his own community, he has witnessed the intergenerational rift over Zionism, as Israel continues its wars against Hamas and Hezbollah. While most of his



Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky
Anshe Chesed Synagogue

congregants would define themselves as liberal Zionists, there are some – particularly among the younger members – who are fiercely critical of Israel and uncomfortable with Zionism. "This rift has become a significant challenge, with many parents struggling with arguments about Israel with their children," Kalmanofsky notes.

He intends to tell his congregants that while disagreements, even strong ones, may exist, Jews should not make enemies of one another. He attributes great importance, he says, "to listening to dissenting voices, understanding the depth of their concerns. I emphasize the importance of maintaining a sober perspective. This is the only way to keep the community whole."

Kehilat Rayim Ahuvim's spiritual leader, Rabbi Adam Mintz, will center his Rosh Hashanah message around the need for Jews to stick together despite their differences.

"We need to understand that what unites us is far greater than what divides us," he says. "Even though everyone has strong feelings – whether it's about Israel, the hostages or the upcoming presidential elections – these feelings often lead to thinking 'I'm right and you're wrong,' and that's okay. That's just human nature. But we also have to be nonjudgmental in recognizing that while we believe we're right, it's okay for someone to have a different opinion. Having a different opinion isn't evil."



Rabbi Michelle Dardashti
Oona Hart

"We've reached a point where we sometimes feel that holding a different view means you're not part of the community," Mintz says. "Now, I understand that this is partly a reaction to truly unacceptable opinions – like the idea that Israel deserved what happened on October 7. That's completely unacceptable. But within the realm of acceptable opinions, we need to be more open to the fact that others might disagree with us."

Stephen Wise Free Synagogue's Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch will be focusing his sermon on why the Jewish community, particularly U.S. Jews, is struggling to respond to the events of October 7 and what has followed.

"This inability stems from a disconnection with our own story," he says. "We did a good job in promoting Jewish universalism, but not a great job in teaching that Jewish responsibility begins with one Jew being responsible for another."

To address this, Hirsch will call for a renewed focus on Jewish literacy and education. He will also urge his congregants to balance their commitment to social justice with a deep connection to their heritage and responsibility toward one another, especially in times of crisis.

"U.S. Jewry must not shy away from *tikkun olam* [repairing the world], but understand that it must flow from *ahavat Yisrael* – the idea of one Jew caring for another." Rabbi Michelle Dardashti, the spiritual leader of Kane



Rabbi Rachel Timoner
Julie Markes

Street Synagogue, says the usual reflection and introspection that characterize this season "feel almost unbearable" this year.

"Do we really need a brush with death right now to be reminded of life's precariousness?" she asks. "How do we wish one another a good year while still in the throes of war? How do we celebrate a fresh start while there are still hostages suffering, and countless families grieving, displaced and tending to their wounded?"

Dardashti says she will talk with her congregation about finding the tools within Judaism to help them come together and overcome trauma and division. "Our tradition teaches that there are three particularly powerful tools for doing the work of this season. They are teshuvah (repentance/return), tefillah (prayer) and tzedakah (acts of righteousness). I talk about these as being about reaching in, reaching beyond and reaching out."

This year, she says, "there's a fourth tool essential to our making it into and through 5785 whole also starting with a T: tikvah, hope, is the generator. It turns on the lights. It's the hope that is active, courageous and bold, which enables the other three. It's my job and message this year to inspire that sort of tikvah – renewed hope in our people, our story and our future. We are a people who hope beyond hope: we are a people who turn on the lights."

All the honey in the world can't sweeten this Rosh Hashanah

Analysis Allison Kaplan Sommer

This time last year, Israeli families were joyfully preparing for Rosh Hashanah – getting ready to dress up in their festive best, buying and wrapping gifts, joining their extended family for an elaborate evening of meals, reflecting on the year behind them and expressing hopeful wishes for a better Jewish New Year ahead. They were blissfully and innocently unaware that October 7 was lurking around the corner, about to transform their lives.

One Israeli television channel hammered that point home in a recent broadcast highlighting last year's naive optimism. In a heart-rending montage, photos of happy families at their 2023 Rosh Hashanah celebrations flashed on the screen, one by one. Amid those pictured were men, women and children who were taken hostage and imprisoned in Gaza over the past year, some of whom were killed in captivity.

In their worst nightmares, no one in Israel could have conceived of what the holiday would feel like the following year.

The national mood is dark with the approaching anniversary of October 7, the fallen soldiers and civilian casualties, the painful open wound of the hostages in Gaza, and the tens of thousands of Israeli evacuees from the north and south who are living far from their homes – many of which are damaged or destroyed. In addition, they live under the rule of a government that has lost the faith of a large majority of its citizens, who feel they can no longer count on their leaders to keep them safe and make wise decisions that aren't based on political interests.

There isn't enough honey in the world to make this

Rosh Hashanah feel sweet.

This lack of enthusiasm in the air as the holidays approach is palpable – fewer decorations, less bustle on the streets and in stores, fewer comedic advertisements for holiday food and wine and a dearth of silly memes and videos circulating online.

For many in the secular community, who have no religious obligation to mark the beginning of a new year,

Israelis couldn't have imagined this holiday in their worst nightmares.

the response to the common question, "Where will you be celebrating the holiday?" has been a shrug and the reply: "Who's in the mood to celebrate?" Greetings for a "Sweet and Good New Year" have been automatically adjusted to wishes for a "A Better New Year" – with an eye roll and an emphasis on the word "better."

What was already a difficult holiday became more so as Israel's latest offensive against Hezbollah has unfolded in Lebanon.

True, many Israelis are heartened by what seems to be a restoration of deterrence, the Israeli army taking the initiative, and sparks of hope for the prospect of an end to the yearlong bombardment of the north. But the increased worry over missiles launched from Iran leaves extended families who want to be together afraid to travel, as they worry about such attacks occurring while they're on the road. Additionally, mass calls for combat soldiers as Israel's ground incursions into Lebanon expand means that families who endured their relatives' absence for months on end as they fought in Gaza will now be missing them on Rosh Hashanah as well.

Until Tuesday – the day before the holiday was to begin – those attending synagogue in most of the country were able to comfort themselves knowing that at least the religious services there would be the same.

But hundreds of congregations found themselves scrambling after the last-minute tightening of the Home Front Command's public safety rules forbidding indoor gatherings of more than 300 people – an announcement which was later followed by a major Iranian missile attack across the entire country.

At least, wherever and however they are able to worship, they know what to pray for.

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HAARETZ

Without Hezbollah, Lebanon economy could rebound

Even with financial crisis, dysfunctional government and brain drain, Beirut has many of the elements for recovery

Analysis David Rosenberg

Back in 2021, it was hard to see how Lebanon could fall any further. The economy had been shrinking since 2011. It fell off a cliff in 2019, with gross domestic product falling by more than half over two years after the national Ponzi scheme that had kept the economy afloat collapsed. The country defaulted on its foreign debt in 2019, its financial system was paralyzed and its main port was decimated in an explosion in 2020. Elections in 2021 resulted in a political stalemate that left the country without a permanent government or president.

As it turns out, things could get a lot worse. As Israelis hail a decisive victory over Hezbollah, Lebanon is being pummeled by Israeli bombs. Hundreds of thousands of residents in the south have fled for fear of Israeli airstrikes. The government – three years later, still a caretaker without a president – not only can't defend the country, it has done nothing to help the refugees or care for the wounded. "They have no money and they have no control over what's happening on the ground," Mark Daou, a lawmaker, told *The New York Times*.

The old chestnut about Lebanon being the Switzerland of the Middle East is nothing more than a fun fact out of the distant past for the history books. The last time Beirut could boast of being a major banking center was before its civil war erupted in 1975. Today, it would be better described as the Somalia of the Middle East, with warlord No. 1 being Hezbollah.

Lebanon's economic fate will depend on its people, its human capital. The country's future will depend on its becoming a knowledge economy.

Yet the Somalia comparison isn't entirely fair. Amid all the dysfunction and chaos in Lebanon, there remains considerable latent potential to return to the glory days.

Rebuilding the economy will not be easy. The government is hopelessly corrupt and ineffectual, as evidenced by the fact that five years into the biggest peacetime economic collapse since the 19th century, it has not even proposed a recovery plan. It is heavily in debt and since it defaulted, can no longer tap the international financial market for funds. Infrastructure is in shambles. The state power company doesn't come close to meeting electricity demand, leaving Lebanese to rely on private generators. The only way ordinary Lebanese can get their money out of the bank is by robbing it.

In the short term, the economy may be even worse off without Hezbollah, which the hundreds of millions of dollars a year it received in Iranian funding was spent on local goods and services. Lebanon also stands to lose the export receipts from

Hezbollah's drug smuggling, arms and cigarette smuggling, and currency counterfeiting mainly in Latin America.

There is also a risk that Israel's successful assault on Hezbollah over the past two weeks could set off a new round of sectarian fighting in Lebanon and destroy the last remnant of political stability and a functioning economy. "The demolition of Hezbollah's capabilities will likely embolden its opponents and anti-Iranian forces within Lebanon," Imad Salamey, an expert on Lebanon at Lebanese American University, told *Al Jazeera*.

But the reverse could also happen: The elimination, or at least significant weakening, of Hezbollah could remove its baleful influence and enable Lebanon to begin rebuilding its decimated economy.

Silver lining

Among other things, Lebanon would have to contend with far fewer Western sanctions, most of which are directed at Hezbollah and affiliated institutions. It is just possible that, freed of Hezbollah interference, a government can finally be formed. Aid and investment from the Persian Gulf and the West may be forthcoming for the first time in years.

Perhaps a more intense effort to find natural gas off Lebanon's Mediterranean coast will get underway. Lebanon's enormous diaspora – estimated at 15.4 million, almost three times the domestic population – could be a source of capital and for opening up foreign markets, just as the Jewish diaspora was for Israel in the past. There is even a silver lining to Lebanon's feckless government, namely less government red tape and low taxes.

But in the end, Lebanon's economic fate will depend on its people, or more precisely its human capital. Without significant natural resources or a domestic market to support industry, the future will depend on its becoming a knowledge economy, one based on technology and sophisticated services, as Tarek Ben Hassen, a Qatar University economist, proposed in a recent article.

Not surprisingly, even in 2019, before the roof caved in, Lebanon had long ceased to be a globally competitive economy. The World Economic Foundation's Global Competitiveness Report that year ranked Lebanon 88th of 141 countries, one notch below Tunisia and one above Algeria – not the kind of neighbors a self-respecting country would want on this league table.

But on a few critical metrics, Lebanon came out looking much better. It placed 24th on graduates' skill sets, 23rd on digital skills and 26th for imparting critical thinking in primary school teaching. And, these rankings probably understate Lebanon's talent base: Like many countries, they are an average between a highly skilled elite and a less skilled majority. But a knowledge economy can get started with a small elite, if it is sufficiently capable.

Lebanon has another knowledge economy asset in its system of higher education. Despite all the

economic and political vicissitudes of the last few years, six Lebanese universities are ranked among the world's top 1,000 (top-ranking American University of Beirut comes in at 250), according to the QS World University Rankings for 2025.

And although it is not much in evidence these days amid economic collapse (the WEF ranked Lebanon 74th in 2019 for entrepreneurial culture), Lebanon has a long history of entrepreneurship stretching back to the days of the Phoenicians. Lebanese labor costs for engineers and the like are low.

These kinds of numbers are a good foundation for a knowledge economy.

The catch is that they reflect the situation as it was in 2019; since then, the collapse of the economy caused the country's traditionally high rate of emigration to balloon 4.5-fold in 2020 and 2021. Many of those who fled were Lebanon's best and brightest, and the young who contend with a youth unemployment rate of nearly 50 percent.

If Lebanon can get its act together, it may be able to lure many of these expatriates back. The knowledge



A makeshift camp for displaced people on a beach in Beirut, Tuesday.

Louisa Gouliamaki / Reuters

that Hezbollah is no longer casting its shadow over the country will certainly be an incentive. The wreckage that Lebanon is today may

be seen by the most ambitious and entrepreneurial as an opportunity.

With or without Hezbollah, establishing relations

with Israel is unlikely. But if Lebanon were to do that and establish a warm peace involving trade, tourism and business deals, like the one

between Israel and the other Abraham Accord countries, the road to a thriving economy would be that much shorter.

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Lebanese and TotalEnergies officials at TransOcean Barents drilling rig offshore Lebanon, 2023. Dalat Nohra/Handout via Reuters

IDF: Ground operation in Lebanon 'focused, limited'

Yaniv Kubovich, Fadi Amun, Jack Khoury, Ben Samuels and Reuters

The army's ground operation against Hezbollah in a number of villages in south Lebanon, which began on Monday night, is "focused and limited" and concentrated, the IDF stated on Tuesday.

The targets have been Hezbollah positions in the villages near the border with Israel, from which the organization represents a threat against Israel's northern communities, said IDF Spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari. He said the purpose of the operation is to allow the evacuees to return to their homes.

The ground operation was supported by attacks from the air and artillery, the army said. The army called up four reserve brigades and other forces for missions in the north, based

on a situation assessment.

At the same time, the Air Force continued to attack deep inside Lebanon and Syria. On Monday night, a Lebanese news agency reported that a number of buildings in the Dahiyeh neighborhood of Beirut had been destroyed. Saudi media outlet Al-Hadath said eight buildings were completely destroyed. Lebanese media also reported that the IDF attacked a structure in Ain al-Hilweh, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, near Sidon. The target of the attack was Munir al-Maqdah, the head of the Fatah's military wing in Lebanon, said two Palestinian sources.

Syrian national television reported that three people were killed and nine injured in an Israeli attack on Damascus. Among those reported killed was an anchorwoman for Syrian television, Safaa Ahmad. The Syrians reported earlier that their

aerial defense systems were activated against hostile targets. The Syrian Center for Human Rights, identified with the opposition, reported that Israel attacked a radar facility and a local airfield in the area of Daraa.

Hagari said after the ground campaign began that the forces located and destroyed during the fighting dozens of tunnels in southern Lebanon, but which did not cross the border into Israel. He claimed they were intended for invading Israel. Numerous types of weapons were found inside the tunnels, including anti-tank missiles, explosive devices and rockets. Special forces also located inside the tunnels intelligence materials showing that thousands of Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants had spent time there at the beginning of the war and were prepared to invade Israel.

The invasion of Israel didn't happen because large

numbers of troops were moved to northern Israel, which led Hezbollah forces to withdraw northward, said the IDF. The likelihood of a broad invasion from Lebanon is now low, since only a few hundred Hezbollah militants are located up to five kilometers from the border with Israel, and only 1,000 are located south of the Litani River. Its rocket forces also suffered serious damage in the past few weeks, but it is still capable of firing rockets and drones at Israel. Locating and destroying the tunnels in southern Lebanon is the main goal of the ground operation, and is expected to continue for a few weeks, said the IDF.

Since the fighting began, the IDF has conducted some 79 ground operations inside Lebanon to destroy Hezbollah's capabilities in the border villages, said Hagari. "The forces gathered valuable intelligence, destroyed



Army tanks maneuvering in a staging area in northern Israel near the Israel-Lebanon border, Tuesday.

Baz Ratner/AP

and neutralized weapons and compounds thoroughly, including underground infrastructure and advanced Iranian produced weapons," Hagari said.

IDF Arabic spokesperson Avichay Adraee announced on his X account that residents of several villages in southern Lebanon must evacuate to areas north of

the Awali River, nearly 60 kilometers from the border.

While U.S. officials cautiously expressed support for the limited ground operation, they also warned of

its potential to expand, both geographically and in duration, potentially leading to Israel becoming entangled in a prolonged military presence in southern Lebanon.

After Iran's unprecedented attack on Israel, we are in a regional war

Continued from page 1

second place after the Israeli-Iranian conflict.

Secondary risks are also growing domestically, as evidenced by the killing spree by terrorists in Jaffa that left six Israelis dead and is believed to have been intended to coincide with the attack from Iran. This is the most deadly terror attack to have occurred inside the Green Line since the October 7 Hamas massacre. Tel Aviv has not suffered a terror attack on that scale since the second intifada.

An incident like that can't help but arouse greater feelings of anxiety and insecurity on the part of the public, no less than a massive barrage of ballistic missiles. We have to take into account similar attempts by Palestinians in the West Bank, at the best and financing of Iran and Hezbollah. There may also be attempts to recruit extremist elements or criminal gangs among Israeli Arabs.

There is no doubt that Israel will respond, and very forcefully, to the massive Iranian attack. Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the Israel Defense Forces spokesman, said the attack "will have consequences." The United States, which is less than five weeks away from presidential elections, is likely to be drawn into the confrontation, against its will. This is a regional and global crisis that may have far-reaching consequences for Israel's security, but also for the global economy and America's global standing. The exchange of blows between Israel and Iran is expected to continue, as made clear by a threat issued by the Iranian delegation to the United Nations.

Just a few days have passed since the celebrations in Israel over the demise of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and already the situation has undergone a complete change.



People taking shelter in Jerusalem during the Iranian attack Tuesday evening.

Olivier Fitoussi

As is often the case, it is unwise to engage in victory celebrations in the middle of a long war against a determined and unsophisticated enemy. It would have been better to wait with the baklava.

Although Iran was not directly harmed by the Israeli attack in Lebanon, it did eliminate the second most important person in the regional axis of resistance after Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Tehran made the decision to attack Israel a few days ago. The IDF spokesman issued directives calling on all Israelis to be vigilant.

Under the circumstances, the fighting in the Gaza Strip, which until the middle of September was designated the main front, has now fallen down the list of priorities for Israel. This is likely to undermine any chances of reaching a hostage deal, which in any case has been in a state of suspended animation for a long time. Even before Tuesday's Iranian attack, the IDF had been calling up for reservists for duty in the north. Now, the call-up will almost certainly be even bigger amid a regional crisis and the risk of further escalation on a number of fronts.

Depending on the U.S.

The Shin Bet security service disclosed this week, albeit without making many of the details public, that it has uncovered several Iranian attempts to assassinate senior Israeli officials, both in Israel and abroad. Iran uses Israeli agents, some of whom were recruited online with the promise of payment. It found fertile ground for these efforts, in part within Israel's criminal underworld. It's reasonable to assume these efforts will continue.

The immediate Iranian threat only underscores Israel's dependence on the Americans — those same Americans whom Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has driven crazy with every step he took in recent weeks. Israel is dependent on the United States not only to coordinate aerial defenses, but also for a continued supply of arms for its offensive operations.

These facts have somehow escaped Netanyahu's die-hard fans who, following Israel's successes in Beirut, are now crazed with a new fantasy — attacking Iran's nuclear facilities without coordinating with America. The messianists' views on this issue are al-

ready being heard loud and clear in television studios. But the reality is that when it comes to Iran's nuclear problem, Israel must act in coordination with America, both to ensure that significant, long-term damage is done and to obtain necessary assistance in both defending itself and attacking.

What matters more than the talk on TV, however, is that these ideas are infiltrating the surroundings of the decision makers. Netanyahu himself decided Monday, at the height of the regional storm, to appeal directly to Iranians in a video urging them to topple the ayatollahs' repressive regime.

On this issue, it's worth recalling the warning that journalist Thomas Friedman delivered through his The New York Times column around a month ago. Friedman said the Biden administration fears that Netanyahu is trying to drag it into a direct war with Iran that would include attacks on its nuclear facilities and in the process would also affect the outcome of the November election.

Netanyahu, needless to say, isn't exactly praying for a victory by the Democratic candidate, Vice President Kamala Harris. The United

States will help Israel now due to both its commitment in principle to Israel and its recognition of Israel's strategic importance to American interests. But Biden, Harris and their advisers will continue to be suspicious.

The return of 'shock and awe'

Twenty-four years after leaving Lebanon, ostensibly forever, and 18 years after returning for a brief and unsuccessful adventure, the Israel Defense Forces is returning to southern Lebanon. On Monday night, troops entered for what was described this time as a focused and time-limited operation, which at the moment is being directed at the outskirts of Shi'ite Muslim villages and dense terrain that are relatively close to the border with Israel.

The IDF General Staff and the Israeli political leadership are hoping that intensive military activity there, for a few weeks, will encounter weaker resistance than is usually thought, given the serious blows that Hezbollah sustained in the aerial and intelligence attacks over the past two weeks. The moves on the ground are intended to complete what has already been achieved and to force Hezbollah and its Iranian patron to agree to a pullback from the border area, in a manner that will persuade many of Israelis that they can return safely to their homes on the southern side of the border, after a year of forced exile. Iran's Tuesday evening attack will affect Israel's priorities and future actions, primarily regarding the Israel Air Force.

In the light of the hostilities along the border until now, and what is beginning to be uncovered on its Lebanese side, it looks as though Israel has no other way, at the moment, to get the abandoned communities repopulated. But the history of the previous confrontations shows that the Israeli plans tend to shatter on the wall of reality; in war, and certainly in a ground offensive, the unex-

pected happens. Usually the enemy doesn't volunteer to play its part in the plans that were drawn up.

What is inarguable is that Hezbollah is in a completely different place than it was a few weeks ago. On October 8, 2023, when Nasrallah decided to join the war that Hamas launched in the south the day before, he restrict the fire of his organization's militants to long-distance: antitank missiles, short-range rockets and afterward also drones. The idea was to pin down large Israeli numbers of forces along the Lebanon border and thus to make his contribution to the Palestinians' struggle in Gaza, without sending his forces to attack inside Israel. Nasrallah's strategy proved itself for about 11 months, even though about 500 of his troops were killed in incidents along the border and a number of the organization's ranking figures were also killed.

When Israel decided, in mid-September, to move to a new stage in the campaign — to move actively to enable the residents to return and to make Lebanon the main arena of the war — the price Hezbollah was paying started to skyrocket. A series of developments — the pagers and walkie-talkie attacks that have been attributed to Israel, the assassination of Nasrallah and two of his top commanders, Ibrahim Akil and Ali Karaki, the elimination of the entire hierarchy of Radwan Force, the systematic aerial offensive that brought about massive damage to Hezbollah's medium- and long-range weapons stockpiles — created a completely new situation along the border, even before IDF troops entered southern Lebanon.

In connection with the Iraq War that began in 2003, the Americans developed an offensive concept they dubbed "shock and awe," whose main element is an opening blow that indeed shocks all the enemy's systems and degrades its capabilities. That's exactly what Israel did to Hezbollah in the past few weeks, albeit after

almost a year of indecisive sparring without apparent strategic results. A significant element of the achievement is due to the patient work of the Israel Air Force over the past year, in ensuring the aerial supremacy of its planes and drones in the skies of Lebanon. A large part of Hezbollah's anti-aircraft capabilities were located, destroyed or bypassed, thereby greatly reducing the risk to the Israeli aircraft and allowing them broader freedom of action than had been anticipated.

The most blatant evidence of the achievements to date is the limited damage Hezbollah has inflicted on the Israeli home front. It appears that the primary reason for Hezbollah's limited response to date is related to the shock that is gripping the organization's top ranks, and not due to a lack of medium range missiles. Despite Israel's significant strikes on Hezbollah's missile stockpiles, the group still has many hundreds of missiles and it's likely that once it pulls its command back together, it will start firing more accurately.

Hezbollah's leadership — more accurately, the new top ranks — is in a state of shock given what has happened. Hezbollah based itself on a veteran command group, which sprang up with Nasrallah in the organization amid its founding at the beginning of the 1980s, and reached their senior positions already almost two decades ago. Almost all those people are gone — either assassinated over the year or eliminated in the past two weeks.

Their replacements are finding a battered and bewildered organization, in which the chains of command and control have become unhinged. A difficulty apparently exists in executing coordinated attacks on the basis of the existing firepower plans. The communications networks were abandoned after the episode of the pagers and walkie-talkies, a large part of the stocks of missiles were destroyed and there

are undoubtedly personnel who are apprehensive about going to the concealed sites of additional launchers, for fear they will be killed. Most oppressive of all, perhaps, is the feeling of breached intelligence.

Even so, a ground entry into southern Lebanon, even limited, will be a different story, more difficult. It's likely that Hezbollah's defensive systems in the villages, and their secrets, are in part visible to Israeli intelligence, but it's more difficult to destroy via air power the subterranean infrastructure of bunkers and tunnels that the organization has created near the border. That's the main reason for the decision to go in on the ground. And as a result, two major difficulties can be expected, which recall what the IDF faced in its invasion of the Gaza Strip at the end of last October.

First, the enemy's resistance need not rest on complex and systematic military systems, but on guerrilla squads that are positioned well in critical areas and could inflict losses on the IDF. Second, the time dimension: The execution of the IDF's plan in Gaza took far more time than had been anticipated, because it turned out that the interplay between built-up areas and underground zones greatly lengthens the duration of the operation and complicates it. Anyone who expects to see tanks and armored vehicles barreling across the terrain, in the style of the Six-Day War in Sinai, is going to be disappointed.

On Thursday the IDF revealed that special operations units had carried out more than 70 raids across the fence, since last October. In their course, combat zones of Hezbollah were uncovered, approach tunnels that enable them to draw close to the border without being seen, and multiple means of combat. There are many more similar compounds in open areas along the fence. Other targets of the operation will be the villages on the line of contact. At the same time, the IDF's instructions to the population of the south to evacuate their homes extend far to the north of that, until the outskirts of Tyre.

The tunes we're hearing from the officers, and through them to the public via the retired generals in the TV studios, are quite familiar: This is a limited move with the aim of pushing back the terrorists from the border, restoring security and bringing back the resident of the evacuated communities. The risks, which as usual are mentioned less, are also known: The slippery slope lies between the first hill that's seized in order to carry out the mission, and the second one, which is stormed in order to protect the forces on the first hill from fire. Thus you sometimes find yourself stuck in a foreign land for 18 years, maybe more. Only one thing seems sure: the land shall not rest quiet, certainly not for 40 years.

sudoku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

The game board is divided into 81 squares, with nine horizontal rows and nine vertical columns. A few numbers already appear in some of the squares. The aim is to fill in numerals 1 to 9 in each of the empty squares, so that every row and column and every box (a group of nine squares outlined in boldface) contains all of the numerals 1 to 9. None of the numerals may recur in the same row, column or box. • [Tips and a computerized version of Sudoku can be found at www.sudoku.com](http://www.sudoku.com)

3	8		9					2
			7					
	2	7	8					4
	5		2	8	6			7
		1		5	7			4
7							5	
2		5	7					
		9					8	
	7	4	3					2
								9

Difficulty: Easy

4	8							
			7	9				8
				2				7
						8	5	1
			9	6				5
					2			
	6				5	4	8	
2	1					6	7	9

Difficulty: Medium

		5		1	8			
					3	2		
	8	1			5			4
				2			8	
4					8		3	6
							7	
				5				7
5		6						
	1				7			8

Difficulty: Hard

Solutions on Sunday

BRAIN STRAIN answers

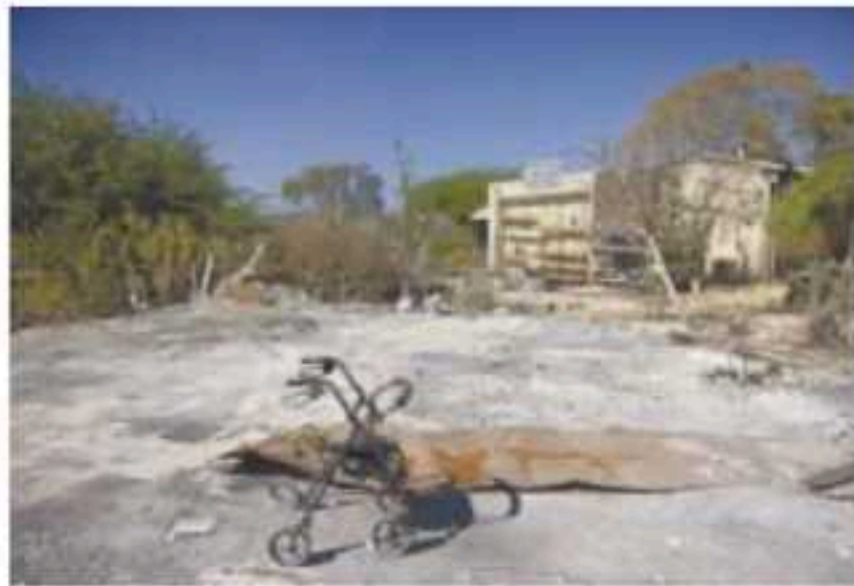
- David Ben-Gurion, in a meeting of his Rafi party, June 19, 1967.
- Yitzhak Wasserlauf (Otzma Yehudit).
- Ezer Weizman resigned as president of Israel in July 2000, under public pressure generated by the state prosecution's report on the subject.
- Warren G. Harding.
- A soldier whose task was to throw grenades.
- The United States of America, named for the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci.
- Caves: Mammoth Cave, the largest cave system in the world, with over 685 kilometers (426 miles) mapped and explored.
- H.G. Wells' "The Time Machine" (1895).
- "Die Hard."
- "Big" (1988), directed by Penny Marshall.

ROSH HASHANAH



Death was omnipresent here

A year later, revisiting Sderot, where a memorial is being built on the ruins of the police station; Be'eri, whose victims are being reinterred; and the site of the Nova rave, with its avenue of portraits of the dead



From top left, clockwise: Highway 232 Near Kibbutz Mifalsim; photos of hostages and of murdered members of Kibbutz Be'eri; a torched home on Be'eri; squills near the cemetery of Kibbutz Nir Oz; and also on Nir Oz, in the background, the damaged home of Yocheved Lifshitz, who returned from captivity in Gaza, and her husband Oded, who is still among the hostages there.

Photos by Moti Milrod

residents have returned. I don't know anyone who hasn't come back. But the situation can't go back to what it was. Life will never be what it was before. You keep coming back to the question: My God in heaven, how did they get this far? It's incomprehensible. It will stay with us for the rest of our lives. Even when there is quiet, there is noise. I was never afraid during any wars, but when it's close to your home, it's noise that never leaves you. The year went by just like that. In a whiz. It went by like wind. Really tough, but it passed."

Last week, at the Sderot Founders House, the people who live opposite the police station met with the tank crew that shelled the three-story building with over two dozen terrorists inside. "The crew thanked us and we thanked them," Dahan relates. A passerby asks us: "In Sderot everyone is a Bibi-ist. How is it you're not afraid to show up here?"

Yellow flags honoring the hostages in Gaza line Highway 232, the road of blood at the border of the Strip, which was used by murderous throngs of Hamasniks. The dozens of burned-out and exploded cars on the shoulders have been supplanted by countless private monuments erected by devastated family members. In some cases there's a sign and a candle, in others a costly, well-designed monument – all of them for young people from the Nova party who tried in vain to flee for their lives along this route from the horrors of the Nukhba. There is a particularly large number of small memorials like this at the Kibbutz Mifalsim bend in the road. Death was omnipresent here.

"Eden Guez, daughter of Aliza and Robert. Your smile is engraved in our heart. Your joie de vivre is our last testament for eternity." There's a Jewish National Fund picnic table and a beer tap, in memory of Eden.

"Stav Gueta, your last will and testament is joy in the heart."

An empty Arak bottle lies next to the shiny pebbled stairs that ascend to the memorial site for Liraz Asulin. She was an accountant at the Neto Group, which does financial planning, and served on the board of the Tamar regional water company. She was 38.

"Kibbutz Nahal Oz. 15 killed. 7 abductees. A commission of inquiry now will avert the next catastrophe," says a

Continued on page 12

The Twilight Zone Gideon Levy

Shula Dahan passed away a month ago. A year ago, on October 9, we visited her home in Sderot. "Visited" isn't the right word: We invaded her home. A bulldozer was collecting bodies of terrorists on the lawn across from her house, a police officer extracted an Israeli ID card from the rubble that had been the police station, French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, wearing his hallmark white shirt, had already arrived for a media-intense solidarity visit. The howl of a siren warning us to enter a safe space sent us scurrying – frightened, we hurtled into the first apartment we came across.

Shula Dahan was sitting on the sofa, terrified, her hands trembling. "She is now a cancer patient, and the horror that grips her is manifested in the incessant shaking of her hands. Pale and terrified, she sits on the sofa next to the safe room... and listens to her husband's descriptions," I wrote at the time. Mika, her dog, never stopped barking; in the stairwell, a young neighbor was seized by a panic attack and could not be calmed down. Meanwhile, Shula's husband, Elisha, began to tell us his story about Sderot – a city he hadn't abandoned since 1956 – and about the atrocities he had seen through the window of his home just two days earlier.

"I thought I was in a movie," he said, adding that he'd witnessed the blood-drenched battle over the police station and terrorists opening the doors of passing cars and shooting the passengers.

A year after the massacre, we've returned to the station that no longer exists. A memorial featuring stone columns is being erected in a new square, at the site: Time is short, the first anni-

versary is fast approaching, and foreign workers – who most likely have no idea what transpired here a year ago – are laboring day and night ahead of the ceremony that's being planned there. It's shaping up to be an impressive monument.

The western Negev communities near the Gaza Strip are preparing for the first anniversary. On Kibbutz Be'eri they're hurrying to bury the dozens of their dead who were initially interred in other places; funeral follows hard on the heels of funeral. Kibbutz Nir Oz is planning its memorial ceremony in the cemetery next to its botanical garden. The site of the Nova rave near Kibbutz

For months, buses full of soldiers and Israeli civilians have been driving through the area daily. It's now a compulsory trip. Soon the memorial sites will become Israel's collective Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Re'im also looks like a construction site. And here in Sderot the monument is being erected.

For months, buses full of soldiers and Israeli civilians have been driving through the area daily. It's now a compulsory trip. Soon the memorial sites will become Israel's collective Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Perhaps visiting foreign dignitaries will be taken here after or maybe even instead of Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem.

A white tent is perched between the site of the Sderot police station me-

morial and the housing project the Dahans live in. A bearded man is arranging plastic chairs in the tent. I ask him what he's doing. I didn't recognize him. It's Elisha Dahan. He's preparing the ceremony he's planned to mark 30 days since Shula's death. Eleven months after we saw her in her living room, she died at home. The bullet holes are still visible in the walls. The aging Mika still barks when the doorbell rings, but Shula is gone. The goings-on in the last year aggravated her condition, Elisha says. "The war didn't do good things to her body."

Shortly after we left on October 9, the Dahans packed their bags and moved in with their daughter, in Gedera. The horror of October 7 had devastated the couple, and for the first time in their lives they self-evacuated, after having refused to leave in all the previous wars. Elisha first had to fix their car – it had been parked opposite the police station and was riddled with bullet holes – and then they drove north. They stayed there for about a month and a half.

Afterward the couple moved to a hotel of evacuees on the Dead Sea. Shula traveled once a week to Kaplan Hospital, in Rehovot, for treatment, until the trip became too much for her. They decided to stop the treatments and to return to their home opposite the police station in Sderot. Shula wanted to die at home, and she got her last wish on September 1. "This is the fate decreed for us," the widower says sorrowfully.

A crane of the Y.A. Gueta company is installing the pillars of the monument. From his window, Dahan sees a new landscape: not only the memorial site in place of the police station, but also two huge murals across the length of the adjacent buildings. The police station is depicted in flames, and above it are Torah scrolls that are also on fire and letters ascending from them into the heavens, all in bold colors: "Simhat Torah 5784," by Eliasaf Miara. On the building opposite, a gift of Bank Hapoalim, is a painting of a lion roaring, mouth agape, a lioness cuddling her cub, the figures of a mother and daughter casting their gaze at the horizon, a synagogue or possibly the Temple that shall be built speedily in our time, in the background.

"Do you have anything to do with this painting? City Hall came and did it without asking us," one resident says.

"Why didn't they ask us first? They could have informed us, at least, said something," complains another resident, who lives in the building adorned with the roaring lion.

Sderot seems to be back to its everyday routine. The supermarket that had been opened after October 7 for a brief time with soldiers in the role of employees, is now bustling ahead of the Rosh Hashanah holiday. The ruins have been rebuilt, the mobile shelters have been decorated, back to normal, at least on the face of it.

Dahan: "Life has completely gone back to what it was and almost all the



Lior Alon on Kibbutz Be'eri. Has guided hundreds of groups, thousands of people, and the job is like a balm to him: to tell and retell the torment of that day.

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ROSH HASHANAH

Power, yes, but to what end?

What failed on October 7 wasn't the Zionist vision, but the violent and distorted interpretation placed on it by Netanyahu and his associates. Like Diaspora Jews in the 19th century, we too are at a dramatic crossroads

Eyal Chowers

"If there is a single legitimate claim of sovereignty, all nations who believe in the Bible must recognize the claim of the Jews. They can do so without fear or envy, for the Jews are no political power and will never be a political power."

—Theodor Herzl, speaking at the Second Zionist Congress, 1898

Almost exactly 70 years before the war of October 7, on the night between October 14 and 15, 1953, Israel Defense Forces soldiers carried out a reprisal raid in the village of Qibya, in Jordan. The decision to carry out the operation was made after terrorists killed a mother and her two children by detonating a grenade in their home in Yehud, a town just north of today's Ben-Gurion Airport, and following a sequence of similar actions of murder and sabotage. The Qibya operation was led by Ariel Sharon, who in the spirit of the orders he received wrote that the aim of the raid was to conquer the village and to inflict "maximum harm on life and property." More than 60 villagers were killed in their homes in the assault, which employed gunfire and grenades, and 45 buildings were blown up.

In an essay published after the event, the philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz wrote that, "Qibya, its causes, implications, and the action itself, are part of the great test to which we as a nation are put as a result of national liberation, political independence and our military power." Because Jews were subject for so long to foreign rule, and as a people lacked ownership of and responsibility for collective means of violence, "our morality and conscience were conditioned by an insulated existence," in which values were cultivated that were "not tested in the crucible of reality." Indeed, Diaspora Jewry viewed itself as "hav[ing] gained control over one of the terrible drives to which human nature is subject... [the] impulse of communities to kill one another."

Leibowitz believed that the 1948 War of Independence was a necessary stage in the acquisition of freedom and removal of the "shame of *galut*" (exile). But with the possibility of employing violence, he argued, came questions of when it is justified and when it is unacceptable, when it is unavoidable and when it is not essential, and even when it is justified yet still cursed and mistaken (as was the case, in his view, with the biblical massacre perpetrated by Shimon and Levi in Shekhem, in Genesis 34, after the rape of their sister, Dina). In fact, Leibowitz asserted, the "religious and moral significance of regaining political independence" — the most pressing challenge of the State of Israel, from his point of view — is that "We are now being put to the test. Are we capable not only of suffering for the sake of [the Jewish] values we cherish but also of acting in accordance with them?"

After October 7, Haaretz published an interview with Prof. Moshe Zimmermann, a scholar of German history and culture. According to Zimmermann, "The moment a pogrom against Jews takes place in the Jewish state, the Zionist state, both the state and Zionism are testifying to their own failure. Because the idea underlying the establishment of a Zionist state was to prevent a situation like that in which Jews in the Diaspora find themselves... The Zionist solution is not [really] a solution."

Oddly, this argument, which has been voiced by many critics of Zionism worldwide, echoes comments that can also be heard coming from the other side of the political spectrum regarding the supreme purpose of the state. For example, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, back in 2015, that his primary goal was to preserve "life itself." (By the way, this was apparently the first building block of Netanyahu's judicial coup in 2023: When ensuring survival itself becomes the essence of politics, the character of the regime becomes secondary.)

Citizens' safety and the preservation of life are, of course, a cardinal goal of every state, democratic or undemocratic. But the purpose of Zionism, according to Leibowitz (and also according to many Zionist thinkers who preceded him, beginning with Leon Pinsker, the author of "Auto-Emancipation," from 1882), was not defined solely by the promise of survival and prevention of pogroms, as though this encapsulated the human horizon of the new Jew. For Leibowitz, the success of national revival depended on what the Jews, as autonomous citizens and as a sovereign nation, would choose to do with their hard-won freedom, and on whether they would choose to uphold, within its framework, the moral values they had cultivated across generations, including the sacred value of human life itself. In this sense, the pogroms that Jews (soldiers in the case of Qibya; anonymous militias in Hawara, Duma,



The aftermath of an Israeli airstrike in Beirut last Saturday. Reports of dozens and even hundreds of civilians being killed or hurt in Lebanon or Gaza in the wake of one assassination attempt or another don't give rise to serious discussion or consideration among the Israeli public and media.

Hussein Mulla/AP

al-Mughayyir, Jit and elsewhere, much more recently) are perpetrating against Arabs and their property, as the army and the police turn a blind eye, also constitute a type of dangerous, ongoing failure — no less than the state's inability to prevent the atrocious and brutal pogrom that was carried out against Israeli citizens and foreign workers in the communities across from the Gaza Strip.

Pogroms are different from wars, and not only because those who are killed are civilians rather than soldiers, or because women, children and men, infants and the aged are all equally among the casualties. In a pogrom, the rampagers are neighbors, some of them people you did business with, worked with, socialized with. The destruction wrought by a pogrom is also an encounter with jolting evil and the shattering of relations of trust, of the delicate weave that people try to forge among themselves over years.

A pogrom is not only a killing spree; its main intention is to create fear, humiliation, prolonged trauma; its target is the mind no less than the body, which sometimes is also savaged and violated publicly. A pogrom also occurs, among other places, in the space where a person is supposed to feel most secure: in the home. It burns into the consciousness the idea that nowhere in the world is safe. And a pogrom also unhinges the sense of place and of memory, and our ability to tell ourselves our narrative: for, you know, the kitchen table we ate at stood there, and the tree we climbed as children was there — both are now burned ruins.

Over the years the Jews have experienced hundreds of pogroms, including during the 19th century, the age of enlightenment and progress. (The "storms in the south" pogroms in Russia, in 1881-1882, were the background to the writing of "Auto-Emancipation"). Even if Jewish communities in the Diaspora had impressive periods of prosperity and success, the Jew was and remains one of the blatant symbols in history of recurring human vulnerability. So it's not surprising that when the Jews' movement of national revival sprang up, some Zionist thinkers did not make do with the idea of a state and sovereignty and the normalizing of Jewish life sought by Herzl. They aspired to something deeper: to create a new Jew, with a consciousness of power and immunity to injury, a Jew who would constitute a response to the future as well as a correction of the past.

A case in point is the writer Micha Josef Berdyczewski,

who in the late 19th century portrayed the Diaspora Jew as a soft person of words, who is ensconced in the *beit midrash* — the study hall — buckling under the weight of tradition and memory, the languishing spiritual life of religious Judaism and its abstract moral ideas, passive in the world of action and impotent in the face of modernity. In the place of the *galuti Jew* — the "Jew of the exile" — Berdyczewski called for the crafting of a new and bold person (and people). An individual who would "awaken from his sleep" and be characterized by a strong will, the ability to do great deeds and by courage. One who would turn to nature and not disavow his own instinctive nature.

An admirer of Nietzsche, Berdyczewski intertwined the return to "Canaan" with reservations about the way of the Prophets and their excessive moralizing. He was also critical of the Judaism that was symbolized by Yavneh in the wake of the destruction of the Second Temple, the Judaism that had transformed the Jewish people into the People of the Book and the commandments. His heroes, in contrast, were the Maccabees, Bar Kochba and perhaps, first and foremost, Joshua and his warriors. "But who are those who are as strict about minor commandments as with more weighty ones, when compared to the heroes of Israel who conquered the land [of Israel] and fought for it?" he asked. The fact that Joshua wiped out the peoples of Canaan, though they had done no wrong, but only because they were living in the land promised to the people of Israel, was of less concern to the well-known writer.

Much time has passed since Berdyczewski wrote those words; but his perception of Zionism as an organized and uncompromising struggle against Jewish and human vulnerability continues to resonate. With the passage of the years, Israel's leaders, in the name of that struggle, welded radical nationalism to religious territorialism, authoritarianism to militarism. Today, however, a year after October 7, it's clear

It's not the Zionist vision that failed on October 7, 2023, but the distorted interpretation foisted on that vision by Netanyahu and the leaders of the Israeli right as a whole.

that we are at a point in time that is no longer part of the disaster-laden temporal continuum on which we marched for years to the drumbeat of that government policy. Like the Diaspora Jews of the late 19th century, we have once more reached a crossroads, frightening in its uncertainty and its fatefulness, at which there is no escaping a sharp choice about who we will be and how (and where) we will live.

In his first speech before the Knesset following October 7, upon the formation of the emergency unity government, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that the "unity of the people is a force multiplier" and that "we all stand in this campaign together [with] fraternity and mutual solidarity." He added, "We have a strong country, a strong government, a strong people and a strong army with a sense of mission."

Coming from Netanyahu, those were interesting remarks, and not only because of his inherent hypocrisy, as he is the person who has deliberately endeavored to destroy internal Israel solidarity for political reasons. Since his return to power in 2009, and more acutely in the past few years, Netanyahu has transformed strength, or the accumulation of power, into the central mission of the state's existence. Instead of a society that measures itself by, for example, its social justice and equality, or by the relations between citizens and the quality of its education, Netanyahu has said over the years that his goal was the promotion of the state's political, economic and security might.

Indeed, Netanyahu bound up the ideology of Israeli power specifically with his leadership and with the authoritarian regime he tried to inculcate. "Israel has never been stronger — not economically, not in security and not diplomatically —

and those things did not happen by chance. They happened because I am leading the country on a path of power," he declared on December 25, 2019, during one of the election campaigns he forced on Israel's citizens. He reiterated those words in different forms countless times in recent years.

Multiple security concepts collapsed on October 7, including the policy of separating Hamas in the Gaza Strip from the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, and the belief in Hamas' moderation and its supposed preference for sovereignty and economic perks over a fundamentalist and antisemitic struggle against Israel's very existence. In the long run, however, the most significant collapse is perhaps that of the ideology of power and authoritarianism promoted by Netanyahu and the country's right-wing leadership in Israel in general. Our uncertainty and vulnerability — in the realms of security, economics, diplomacy, science, culture, emotional health and society — are leaping out at us from every corner, even in the wake of Israel's extraordinary recent military achievements against Hezbollah.

If there's an entity that writes history, it's one that retorts to human hubris with cynicism and cruelty: Precisely the person who raised high the banner of power and persuaded his supporters that we are a regional — even a world — power, and that his leadership alone is the key to that power, and that authoritarianism is the desirable regime model, is the very person who in the end exposed the Israeli weakness to us and to the world in a way that no Israeli leader had ever done before him.

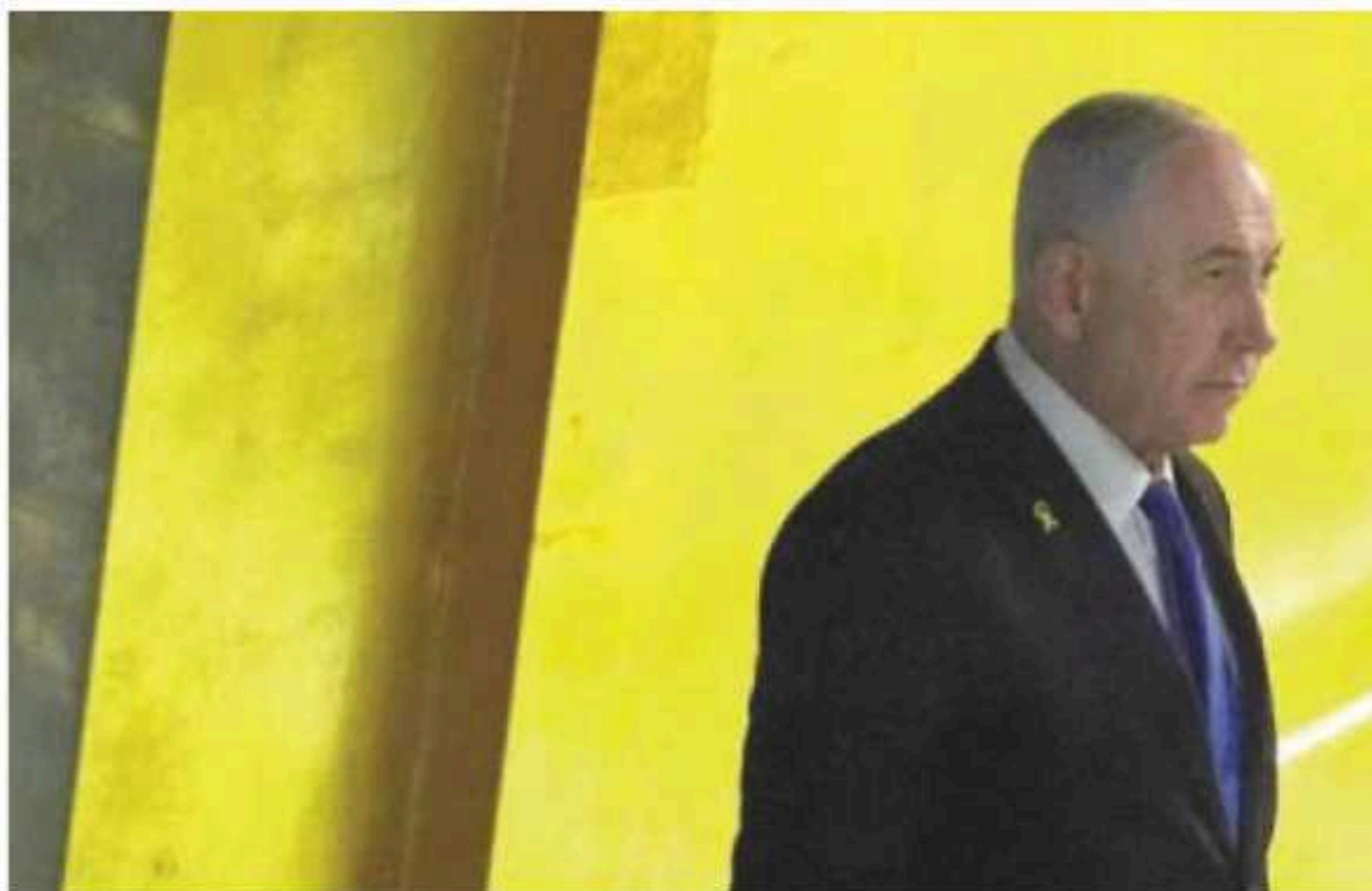
It's not the Zionist vision that failed on October 7, 2023, but the distorted interpretation foisted on that vision by Netanyahu and the leaders of the Israeli right as a whole.

Netanyahu and his followers formulated an ideology of power that's measured by the creation of information-based technology, the scale of budgets and resources, production and the GNP, by advanced weaponry and skilled military personnel, by diplomatic ties in the world and prestige, and the like. In their perception, internal cohesiveness and democratic culture were not a source of Israeli abilities or success.

The more they purveyed the propaganda of power, the more they ceased to look for or see the dangers lurking from our neighbors — Hamas, after all, was "deterred" — nor did they heed the warnings about the possibility of war, and thus forged an illusion of safety; so much so that even the IDF's top brass didn't believe their own warnings and failed to take elementary defensive measures prior to October 7. The right wing's constant blather about the determined and extraordinary quality of Netanyahu's leadership as the key to the success of this worldview enfeebled the public's democratic spirit along with the mutual, horizontal responsibility of ordinary citizens, public officials, bureaucrats and commanders for the welfare and security of the commonality — and contributed to the development of dysfunctional security and governmental systems, in fields ranging from transportation to the police. Then with the judicial coup itself, the Netanyahu government brought the dismantlement of Israeli society to a new level, by creating an unprecedented internal rupture and causing the erosion of Israel's standing in the West to the point where the country's future is threatened.

Power, whether it's thought of as the accumulation of resources and means, or as the ability to shape the actions and even the will of others, is essential in political-policy life. However, the transformation of power into a governmental ideology, as occurred in the Netanyahu era, means the end of that political life, certainly in its democratic sense, which presupposes the decentralization and limitation of power, viewing power principally as a means to achieve other objectives — such as individual happiness or the cultivation of collective freedom and a strong civil society.

More precisely, forces have already arisen today, mainly among the religious-Zionist public and among the traditional right, that talk about a different type of power than that promoted by Netanyahu. In that sense, it could be said that the "golem has turned on its creator." The prime minister, in the past at least, played the Jewish-identity card, but saw power as emanating largely from the institution of the state; accordingly, he preserved a certain measure of state ori-



Netanyahu at the UN last week. He talks of unity while he works to destroy internal solidarity for political reasons. Pamela Smith/AP

ROSH HASHANAH

entation (*mamlakhtiyut*) and respect for the law, and was careful not to isolate Israel internationally; Jewish power, in contrast, is already power of a "tribe."

This Jewish tribe sees itself as one that shall dwell alone, drawing its strength from elements that predate the state historically and substantively and are apparently stronger than it; it is continuous in time and expands in space, it is united by religion and soil, ethnicity and race, a sense of superiority and entitlement – not by citizenship or a state-based ethos. Netanyahu invested these tribal forces with legitimacy, language and inspiration, but today he's captive to their interpretation of the ideology he himself created, just as he is imprisoned by their political clout.

The ideology of power is reflected as well in the character of the war itself, in Lebanon (where its length, nature and goals are still to be revealed), and primarily in Gaza. The government says that its goals are to bring about Hamas' collapse as a governmental and military force, and the return of the hostages, among whom are living women and men who have been languishing in Hamas' tunnels for a year in inhuman conditions, exposed to acute suffering and the risk of death and sexual violence. However, while the prospects of achieving these two goals are not clear, and the government hasn't put forward a strategic plan to implement them and is in fact deliberately deferring their realization, the war in the south has always had a third goal. It is one that is more immediately attainable, and as such has perhaps shaped the hostilities more than the others.

This third goal is not genocide, but "searing of consciousness" and wreaking destruction *per se*: demolishing houses and courtyards; public structures like mosques, universities, hospitals and schools (there are estimates that more than half of the buildings in the Gaza Strip have been damaged or destroyed, including most of the educational facilities); farm fields and hothouses required for subsistence; roads, water facilities, sewage systems and other infrastructure.

This erasure of the built-up space has been compounded by the shifting around of the population from place to place (80 percent of Gaza's residents have had to leave their homes at least once) and a lack of readiness to offer the population a future, certainly not one in Gaza. In the meantime, in place of a governmental alternative, Israel (through repeated raids) is preserving chaos, crime and internal terror, while refusing to accept responsibility for the population, as an occupying military regime is obligated to do.

On top of all this, there are cases, apparently more than a few, in which there have not been (and still isn't) enough food or water, or of medical personnel and equipment – and there is also sometimes indifference to the life of civilians, even if deliberate harm was not done to them (for example, by use of heavy bombs to eliminate targets in areas of large civilian concentration). In Gaza as in Lebanon, reports of dozens and even hundreds of civilians being wounded and

Netanyahu invested these tribal forces with legitimacy, language and inspiration, but today he's captive to their interpretation of the ideology he himself created, just as he is imprisoned by their political clout.

killed in the wake of one assassination attempt or another don't give rise to serious discussion or consideration among the Israeli public and media.

Israel Defense Forces soldiers are risking their lives for Israel's future in a war against a cruel and cynical enemy that is hiding among the Gazan population and whose behavior and governance are unacceptable. Still, it's not clear how far the sweeping destruction in Gaza – some 40,000 killed there since the start of the war, though it's not clear how many of them were terrorists – is an unavoidable result of a legitimate, specific and focused attempt to reduce the number of casualties among IDF troops and strike at deserving targets; and to what degree, alternatively, the destruction and death result from a comprehensive Israeli strategy to project a perception of military power and raw violence.

The apprehension arises that this is what war looks like when carried out by a government that placed the ideology of power and authoritarianism at the heart of its politics, and then discovered that it had been profoundly humiliated. Consequently, anxious to erase the images of its citizens who were abandoned to their fate, and massacred in their own homes, it inflicts even greater horrors on the other side. At the same time, it finds it difficult to arrive at agreements and arrangements in which the enemy and its leaders continue to survive in any way, shape or form, since that survival will serve as reminder of the humiliation and the impotence. This kind of thinking is also partially behind the assassination of Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of Hezbollah, which, in addition to its major operational consequences, also has the meaning of destroying a symbol that inflicted repeated humiliations on the State of Israel.

Perhaps Hamas' supreme goal is to draw all Palestinians and Israelis, Muslims and Jews, into the lair where Jihad Street meets Amalek Alley, so that in the darkness all will be equal, both in the eyes of the world and in our own eyes, in barbarism and in the trampling of the basic moral values. To go by attorney Karim Kahn, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, who is seeking warrants for the arrest of Israel's prime minister and defense minister, Hamas is apparently close to achieving its goal. Precisely because of this, democracy and the preservation of its values as the defender of human rights should have been posited as goals of the war, certainly when confronting a quasi-totalitarian regime. But that is beyond the capability of the present government of Israel.

The question of what we are fighting for is part of the war itself. War, amid its horrors and destruction, is often also a moment of clarity. Some of the greatest orations about democracy in history, such as those by Pericles and Abraham Lincoln, were delivered by leaders in time of war. They remained in the memory of Western civilization not only because they stirred hope and provided consolation, but because they imparted broad meaning to the war being waged, beyond the goal of the physical survival of a nation and its individuals, and enabled citizens and nations to transcend themselves.

The values that underlie a war are the most important element in motivating a people, said Winston Churchill, because they represent "a cause which rouses the spontaneous surges of the human spirit in millions of hearts." Indeed, in his historic speech of May 19, 1940, his first as prime minister, Churchill asserted that this was a decisive hour "for the life of our country, of our empire, of our allies, and, above all, of the cause of freedom." Democracies and republics, from the days of Athens and Rome, and down to Britain and the United States, were among the most successful nations in times of war, precisely because of their ability to speak in the name of high moral and humane values and to spur every citizen to make an effort to realize the good within themselves.

In contrast, most of the Israel's leaders (Netanyahu among them) have chosen historically to present the country's wars as part of an existential conflict for survival, rather than as struggles for human freedom and democracy. In this, they have minimized the meaning of Zionism and Israeliness, and ignored the high purposes we aspire to as citizens and humans. It was in that spirit that Prime Minister Golda Meir spoke in the Knesset at the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, and Prime Minister Menachem at the beginning of the first Lebanon war. Begin, for example, offered his principal justification for the war in saying, "Will we of this generation abandon Jewish blood?... If the hand of any two-footed animal is raised against [our children], that hand will be cut off."

Indeed, Begin's June 1982 speech is a milestone in the dehumanization of the Palestinians, as part of the justification for an ostensible war of survival and for the unrestrained actions in it, but it was preceded by others, including important words spoken by commanders to soldiers prior to their going into battle.

A study conducted by Dr. Netta Galnoor-Tene of the motivational "combat bulletins" (*dapei krav*) issued to soldiers throughout Israel's history, shows that as early as the War of Independence, references to the enemy (Egypt, in this case) as animals can be found in the combat bulletins. In one such message to the forces on the southern front, Abba Kovner, the Holocaust partisan and afterward kibbutznik,

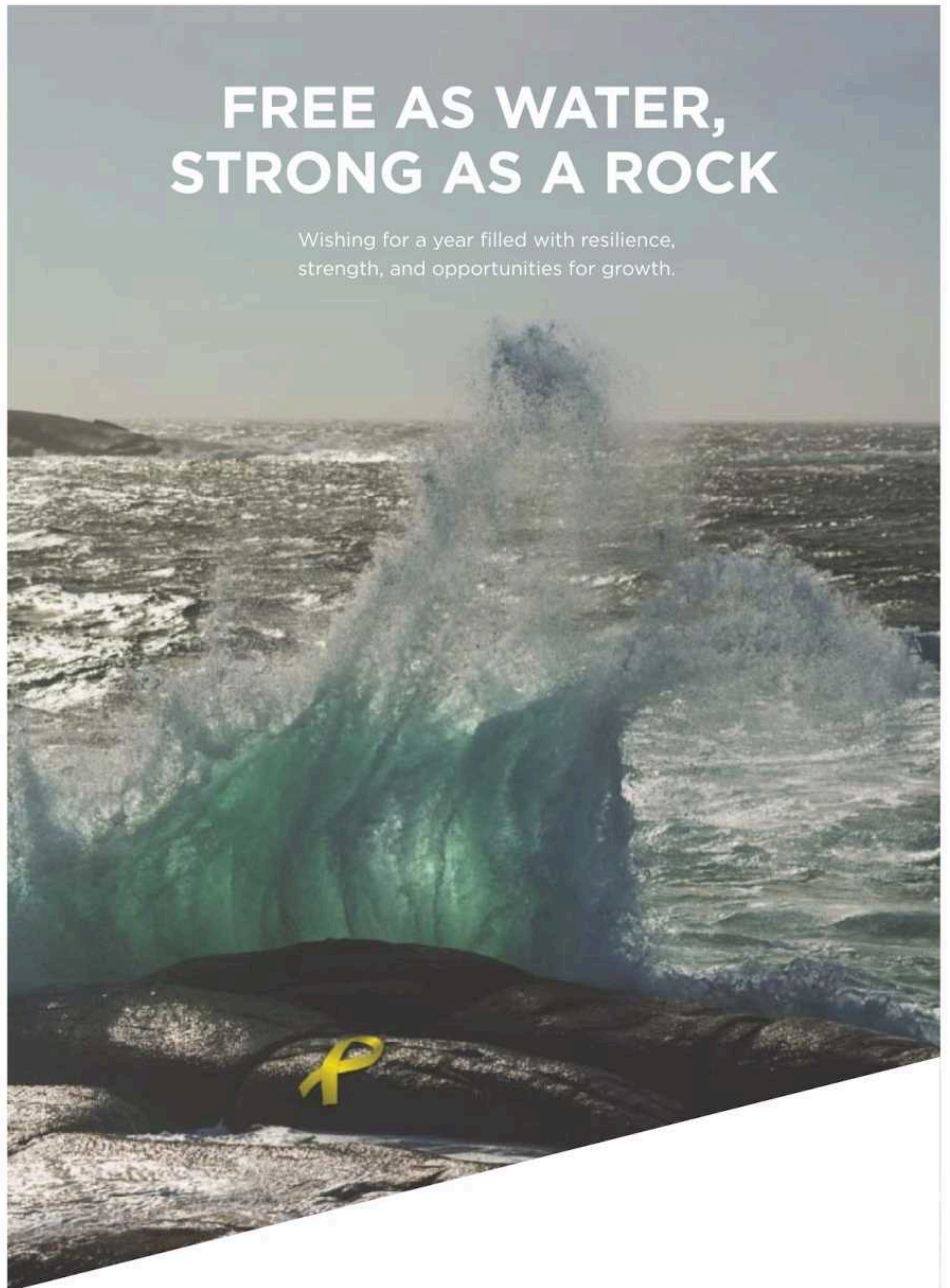
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Kibbutz Kissufim. A pogrom targets the mind no less than the body, which can also be savaged and violated publicly. Hadar Perush

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ROSH HASHANAH

Yofi Tirosch

During the week before Hamas' murderous attack on the Gaza border communities on October 7, a major controversy was roiling Israel. It concerned the fear of clashes during the then-upcoming celebrations of Simhat Torah that never took place because the war broke out. About two weeks before that festival, Yom Kippur prayers held in Tel Aviv highlighted the political tension between anti-Netanyahu protesters and supporters of the prime minister. The former had been flooding the streets for months, protesting the government's attempts to neuter the Supreme Court and to erode the separation of powers. The coalition's base, meanwhile, supported – and continues to support – the judicial overhaul which, if successful, would hasten the annexation of the occupied territories, perpetuate the exemption of Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) men from the draft, and strengthen the grip of religious law on women and LGBTQ people.

Last Yom Kippur, a nonprofit organization named Rosh Yehudi (literally, Jewish mind) applied for a permit to hold Yom Kippur prayers in Tel Aviv's Dizengoff Square – the symbolic heart of the city. It requested permission to use public electricity, to arrange chairs at the site and to stop the square's famous Yaacov Agam fountain from operating during the holiday so that participants could hear the service without a microphone. Rosh Yehudi is headed by Israel Zaira, a social activist and real-estate entrepreneur who has been promoting Jewish takeovers of mixed Jewish-Arab cities and boasting that he proudly aims to "religi-fy" Israel.

The Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipality accepted Zaira's requests on one condition: that during the prayers there would be no *mechitza* – the physical partition separating men and women that's used in Orthodox synagogues. A petition against Tel Aviv's refusal to allow the *mechitza* to be erected was submitted by a new and unfamiliar organization called the Forum for Liberty and Human Dignity in Israel a few days before Yom Kippur. In a hastily written decision one day before the holiday began, the Supreme Court upheld Tel Aviv's policy, emphasizing that the issue at hand was not freedom of worship, but rather the nature of Israel's public sphere. There are more than 500 Orthodox synagogues in Tel Aviv, the court wrote. "Therefore, the case does not concern prayer at a synagogue, but rather prayer in a public space, in one of the most central locations in the city of Tel Aviv – Dizengoff Square... A *mechitza* in a synagogue cannot be treated the same way as a *mechitza* in a public area, hence we cannot accept the appellant's claim that a synagogue is no less a 'public sphere' than Dizengoff Square is."

The prayers held there on the eve of Yom Kippur were marked by heart-breaking clashes. Rosh Yehudi tried to bypass the *mechitza* prohibition by using a makeshift barrier in the form of a rope studded with Israeli flags to cordon women off from men. To further stoke the fire, Rosh Yehudi bussed ultra-religious settlers to the square from the Kiryat Arba settlement and its environs. Like a number of similar organizations operating throughout Israel, Rosh Yehudi openly declares that its goal is not to bring the disparate elements of Israeli society closer but rather to win over the hearts and minds of secular Israelis and to draw them to their extremist understanding of Judaism and their narrow interpretation of religious practice.

For many Tel Aviv liberals, the controversy over barriers separating the sexes on Yom Kippur last year reflects a schism that touches on much broader and deeper worldviews. These people saw Rosh Yehudi's initiative as a deliberate assault on their way of life, correctly identifying the organization's intentions and actions as overt and determined efforts to instill the ideology of messianic Judaism, and to normalize and expand the grip of religious law and the conservative value system that enshrines sexism, nationalism and xenophobia.

Until recently, the ongoing war in Gaza has pushed this controversy to the margins of public consciousness. However, a petition recently filed by Rosh Yehudi, again requesting that the district court order the municipality to allow gender-segregated prayers on Yom Kippur, which falls next week, has brought the issue back to national awareness. Recognizing that many synagogues will be packed on Yom Kippur because many Israelis want to attend services that day although they do not do so regularly throughout the year, the municipality replied to Rosh Yehudi's recent request to hold prayers at Dizengoff Square by saying outdoor segregated services will be allowed in a synagogue's courtyard if that synagogue is full, but not at standalone events such as at the square.

The issue of separation between male and female worshippers by means of a barrier in the city square has thus become a flash point in the fierce debate over the essence and nature of life in the State of Israel.

Since 2000, gender segregation in Israel has consistently been on the rise. No longer a practice confined to religious weddings and schools, or to public transportation serving Haredi



A gender-segregated event in Tel Aviv, 2022. The campaign of extremist rabbis against notions that they have turned into red flags, such as "post-modernity" and "progress," is a fight against any perceived divergence from a highly rigid conception whereby women and men have strictly defined characteristics, roles and functions. *Mei Mired*

'Our salvation lies with you, dear girls'

Under the cover of the government's judicial overhaul and the war in Gaza, extremist messianic forces have been ratcheting up their 'occupation' of the public domain, campaigning to severely restrict and even exclude the presence of women – even in Tel Aviv

communities, the government has been institutionalizing such segregation to make it easier to draw Haredi men into the labor market and encourage their conscription in the Israel Defense Forces. Today, institutions of higher learning offer subsidized undergraduate programs in which Haredi men and women study on separate campuses, female professors are barred from teaching male students, and female students' dress is monitored for "modesty." Likewise, the civil service offers separate professional training to Haredi men and women, and local municipalities fund shows and concerts at which

During the past year, pro-gender segregation forces in Israel have taken advantage of the state of emergency to amplify their oppressive messaging and double down on their conservative vision of the state.

Haredi women and girls can only buy tickets for the back rows or the balcony. Netanyahu's coalition, dominated by religious parties, has also been expanding and normalizing sex segregation in parks and other public spaces.

Prior to Yom Kippur 2023, gender segregation during prayers, as opposed to at other activities, was a strictly religious affair; the debates around it took place within religious communities. Indeed, in the past half-century, the necessity for the *mechitza* in the synagogue has been debated by religious feminists who dispute its height and opacity – and sometimes its very presence.

Israeli law views gender segregation in synagogues and elsewhere as an aspect of religious freedom that must be protected. Thus, in its 2021 ruling regarding the constitutionality of segregated academic programs, the High Court of Justice held that the closer a custom is to the core of religious practice, the stronger the protection it should be afforded under the law.

In public debates as well as in the Knesset and in the courts, religious leaders have repeatedly complained that it has become increasingly difficult to be an observant Jew in the Jewish state. The opposite is true. The freedom to conduct gender-segregated worship in the tens of thousands of Orthodox synagogues in the country that (unlike Conservative or Reform synagogues) are funded by the state, the freedom to separate men and women in colleges and the separate hours allocated for men and women at public

beaches and swimming pools – none of these are under threat. Nor is there any challenge to the right to wear head-coverings as religious people do, despite occasional claims to the contrary.

What is currently under threat in Israel, and which until recently was well-entrenched in Israeli law and society, is a person's ability to lead their lives with dignity and under conditions in which they enjoy equal opportunities regardless of their gender or sexual identity. The real question now is: How will Israeli men and especially women be able to conduct themselves in public spaces – on sidewalks and in squares, on trains and buses, in classrooms and offices?

An issue of 'moral purity'

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur last year, MK Limor Son Har-Melech of the extreme-right Otzma Yehudit party spoke at an event on behalf of Amiram Ben-Uliel, the Jewish terrorist who was convicted of the 2015 arson attack that killed three members of the Dawabsheh family and was sentenced to three life sentences plus 20 years. Her speech provided a stark illustration of the connection between Jewish supremacist ideology and the campaign to promote gender segregation and women's "modesty": "I know that Amiram is innocent. I visited Amiram, and this saint, this holy saint, not only did he refuse [to see me]. I had brought with me another man to be in the same room with him, and I would just stand behind him and hide myself. No female prison guard when he passes through the hallway, no female prison guard is present. And I find it so beautiful, this holiness and piety, and it just really tells you who this man is... That holy man, whom I really think is suffering there for all of the people of Israel."

For Son Har-Melech, the murderer's "beautiful" insistence on not looking at women or interacting with them in any way testifies to his moral purity. She emphasizes these things, knowing they will resonate with her audiences and help convince them of his righteousness and innocence.

Not long afterward, following the Yom Kippur debacle in Tel Aviv, another controversy erupted in the city. On October 5, the eve of Simhat Torah, the High Court held a hearing regarding the municipality's refusal to allow the same nonprofit, Rosh Yehudi, to hold gender-segregated *hakafot* – festive holiday processions – in the city. As he entered the court, Israel Zaira told the religious Arutz Sheva website: "We will act in accordance with the law. But any law prohibiting barriers between men and women is an immoral law that is bound to disappear from the world. This is a hubristic law that pretentiously seeks to dictate to religious people their faith, presuming to re-educate the 'obsolete Orthodox people' in the virtuousness of the new religion of enlightened progressivism."

"We will never allow you to impose laws on us that oppose the Torah... My respect for my wife and the modesty she undertakes to pray or dance without men gazing upon her – is far greater than the false and imagined equality that a loud and coercive minority is now trying to impose on us."

Since the first months of the war, religious leaders have labored to leverage the trauma it has caused to promote their gender-oppressive agenda, presenting that agenda as consistent with *halakha* (Jewish law) but, in fact, exploiting it to present a marginal and distorted vision of patriarchal, fundamentalist and messianic Judaism.

On October 12, five days after the Hamas massacre, Prof. Yoel Elitsur, a biblical scholar and one of the found-

ers of the Gush Emunim settler movement, published an article on Srugim, a religious-Zionist website (the article was later removed). Elitsur wrote that the slaughter of the Gaza border communities took place because God "was left with no other choice," adding, "The Holy One blessed be he has a set plan... And he will not give up – not this land or any parts of it, not the people, and not its destiny as a holy people and a light unto the nations. What will God do now that forces in Israel have, regrettably, risen... forces who choose vanity and promote sexual abominations and present women as men?"

It has always been easy to trivialize gender issues, yet this a grave mistake – one that Israeli liberals have repeatedly made, leading them to underestimate the determination of their illiberal and political extremist foes.

In the ultra-religious lexicon, the expression "present women as men" refers to any practice or phenomenon, however minor, that challenges established gender conventions: from long-haired men and pant-wearing women to transgender individuals. The campaign of extremist religious-Zionist rabbis against notions that they have turned into red flags, such as "post-modernity" and "progress," is a fight against any perceived divergence from a highly rigid, essentialist conception according to which women and men, by their very nature and God's will, have strictly defined characteristics, roles and functions.

This campaign continues even at a time of war. During the past year, pro-gender segregation forces in Israel have taken advantage of the state of emergency to amplify their oppressive messaging and double down on their conservative vision of the state. By tying the issue of national security to "family values," they promote the gendered doctrine of religious nationalism. On October 19, when it became clear that Israel was deeply mired in war, Rabbi Snir Gueta, a former soccer player, pleaded in a TikTok video: "Dear girls, our salvation lies in the hands of righteous women; our salvation lies in your hands. We want to start a campaign of shredding to prevent sentencing [a pun in Hebrew]. Every daughter of Israel, who, with God's help, will undertake to tear up her immodest clothes, short pants, skimpy undershirts, etc... To protect and preserve the soldiers and the hostages... Remem-

ber – when you discipline yourself, the Holy One blessed be he withholds punishment thanks to you."

In response, young women shared hundreds of videos in which they take up that call. "I tore up one piece of clothing; I am doing my best"; "I shredded all my immodest clothes; with God's help, I will save one more soldier."

This campaign to further gender oppression has not been limited to TikTok and has even endangered lives. In one incident, women were not allowed to enter a bomb shelter used as a synagogue during an air raid siren in Tel Aviv. In another incident involving a shelter-turned-synagogue, women were told to remain in the hallway outside, which was more vulnerable to the falling missiles.

A common response to the trends outlined here is to dismiss them as negligible and anecdotal, or to claim that to focus on them is to draw attention away from the central issues currently facing Israeli society. It has always been easy to trivialize gender issues, yet this a grave mistake – one that Israeli liberals have repeatedly made, leading them to underestimate the determination of their illiberal and political extremist foes. For instance, this is how secular Israelis have not noticed that social-studies curriculums in their children's schools have been effectively hijacked by right-wing and religious propaganda. The same shortsightedness is also evident in the liberals' failure to recognize the centrality of gender and sexuality issues in the ideology of those attempting to sabotage Israel's democracy.

'A new normal'

Netanyahu's far-right government has made it impossible to ignore these issues or deny their importance. A significant part of its agenda is dedicated to advancing legislation and policies that would harm women and LGBTQ people's rights, equality and autonomy. The coalition agreements aim to deepen the hold of *halakha* over every day life, to minimize the tools and resources available for legal protection against sexual violence, to censor educational curricula promoting gender equality, and to advance conservative family values. Right-wing lawmakers are ratcheting up their efforts to legalize gender segregation, allow business owners to refuse service that opposes their religious faith and to expand the jurisdiction of rabbinical law and rabbinical courts.

The coalition agreements are not merely aspirational. During the first two months of its rule after the 2022 election, the government began to demonstrate its seriousness on gender-related issues in numerous ways. First, the current administration has set a record low in terms of the number of female ministers, ministerial directors general, and chairs of Knesset committees, placing Israel at the bottom of international charts on gender equality in government. The government also shut down the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women, dismissing a series of senior female officials and replacing them with men. It has blocked legislation and policy decisions addressing sexual violence and transferred hundreds of millions of shekels to initiatives "strengthening Jewish identity." Coalition ministers and MKs regularly carry out vicious attacks in the media against top female officials, including the current attorney general. Last year, the civil service commissioner ordered that only male pronouns be used in announcements of government job openings.

These examples – merely a sample – make it clear that curtailing gender equality and sexual freedom is a core tenet of this government and part of its plan to transform Israeli society. In the authoritarian, patriarchal society it is busy bringing about, the demand for women's and LGBTQ equality has already become a provocative political stance.

A "new normal" is now taking hold, in which women's rights can be infringed as a matter of course. For example, in May 2023, the media reported that the Shufersal supermarket chain used stickers to cover women's faces on hair-color packaging in its branch in Haredi-dominated Bnei Brak. The chain's first response was to admit it had covered women's faces but it added that this was an appropriate measure to accommodate customers in that area. It is hard to believe that any public relations office would have dared to release such a response before the current government's rise to power.

To legitimize their policies, proponents of gender segregation utilize liberal values and concepts, and argue that tolerance and multiculturalism dictate the acceptance of separation between the sexes. Religious leaders exploit this language consciously and opportunistically, as they do not believe it or apply it in their own communities. The liberals are entangled in it naively.

Indeed, many among the Israeli public are still confused about gender segregation, as if this is a matter involving a majority's tolerance of a cultural minority. But the question today isn't whether it's appropriate to be tolerant of separation between the sexes and practices that preserve modesty in religious communities, but rather

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The protest against last year's gender-segregated Yom Kippur eve service, organized by the Rosh Yehudi nonprofit in Tel Aviv's Dizengoff Square. The group tried to bypass the *mechitza* prohibition by using a makeshift barrier. *Tomer Appelbaum*

HAARETZ תרבות

Editor in Chief: Aluf Benn

English Edition

Editor in Chief: Esther Solomon

Print Editor: Liz Steinberg

Managing Director, Haaretz Group

Rami Guez

Managing Director, English Edition

Aviva Bronstein

Haaretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

21 Schocken St., Tel Aviv 61350 Israel.

Tel: 03-5121212 Fax: 03-6810012

Customer Service Tel: 03-5121700 Fax: 03-5121703

E-mail: nyti@haaretz.co.il Advertising: 03-5121774, 03-5121112

Letters to the editor: LTE@haaretz.co.il

May this year and its troubles soon be over

The State of Israel is in the midst of the most difficult period in its history, under a reckless leadership headed by a man whose only promise he has made and kept to his people was to live by the sword. In remarks made at a new year's cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu briefly mentioned the 101 hostages whom he has abandoned to suffering and death in Hamas' tunnels in the Gaza Strip, half of whom are no longer alive.

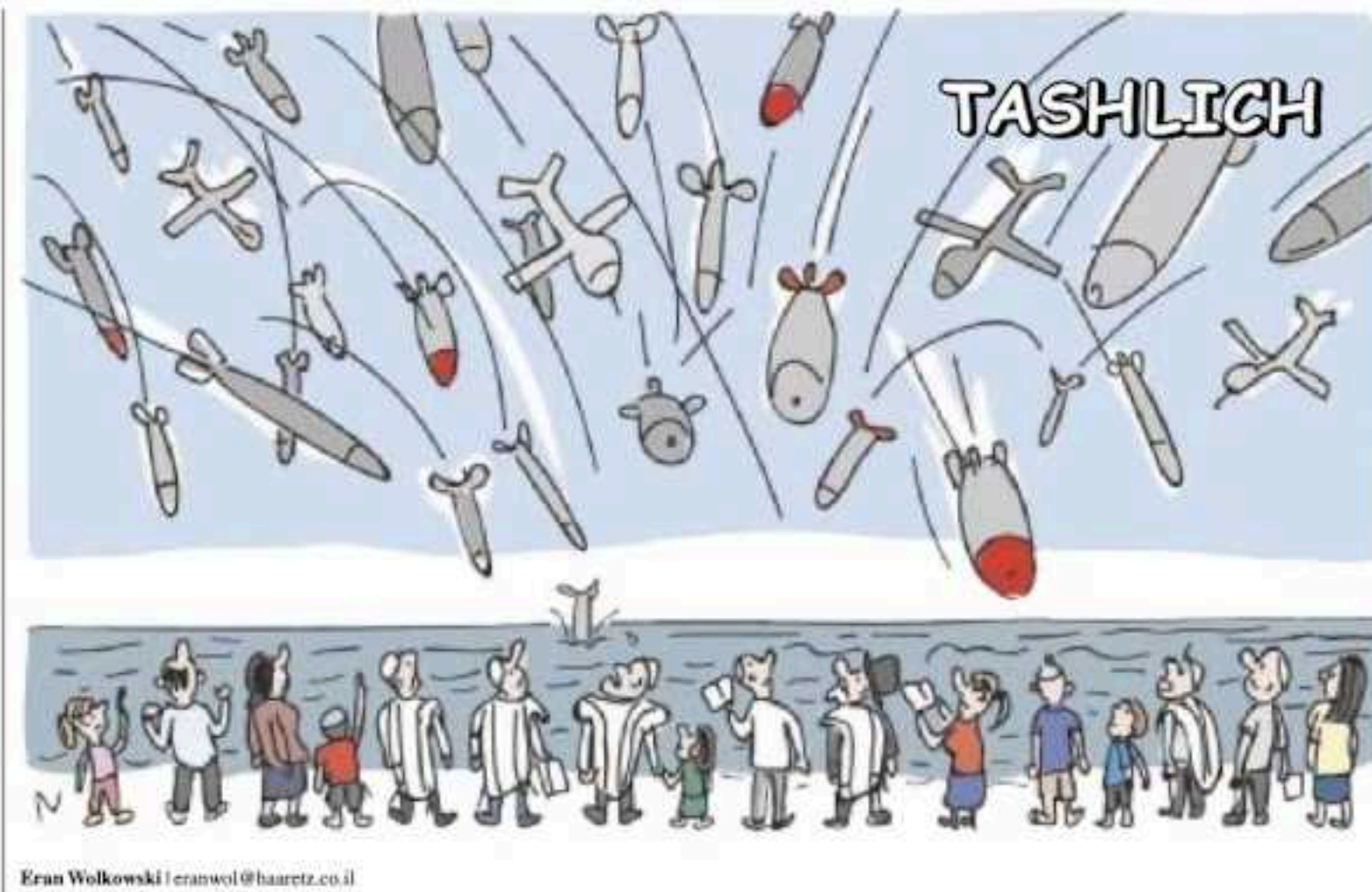
Under its thoughtless leadership, Israel is taking giant steps towards a regional war while the world keeps asking itself, What does it want? Where is it heading?

Ayman Safadi, the Jordanian foreign minister, best captured those feelings in a speech that has gone viral across the globe but has been completely ignored by Israel. At a press conference following a joint celebration by Arab representatives during the UN General Assembly session, Safadi exercised his right to speak and say things all Israelis must hear. "The Israeli prime minister came here today and said that Israel is surrounded by those who want to destroy it," he began. "We're here — members of the Muslim-Arab committee, mandated by 57 Arab and Muslim countries — and I can tell you very unequivocally, all of us are willing to guarantee the security of Israel in the context of Israel ending the occupation and allowing for the emergence of a Palestinian state."

This is not to say that Hamas did not seek to vanquish Israel, that Hezbollah is not a bitter and cruel enemy or that Iran is not seeking the worst for us, but Safadi has served to remind us of an undeniable truth: Under its long years of rule by Netanyahu, Israel has not lifted a finger for the sake of peace with the Palestinians but the reverse.

"Do they have a narrative other than 'I'm going to continue to go to war and kill this and kill that'?" he asked. "Ask any Israeli official what their plan is for peace, you'll get nothing because they're only thinking of the first step — we're going to destroy Gaza, inflame the West Bank, destroy Lebanon. After that, they have no plan. We have a plan, we have no partner for peace in Israel."

On the eve of Rosh Hashana 5785, when the only horizon Israel's leaders offer is war, we can only hope that in the coming year we will be blessed with a profound change in leadership and a new vision for the country. May this year and its troubles soon be over.



Eran Wolkowski | eranwol@haaretz.co.il

Zvi Bar'el

In their death, they willed us Gaza

The imaginative proposal that could end the war in Lebanon envisions a huge multinational force landing on the country's shores. Its soldiers would deploy along the Lebanese-Israeli border together with the Lebanese Army, under an agreement with the Lebanese government, and create a security zone, a "ring of fire," that would prevent Hezbollah from shooting at communities in northern Israel.

This could also be the proposal for ending the war in Gaza. Soldiers from Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Jordan would deploy along the Philadelphi route, on the Gaza-Egypt border, and escort the convoys of trucks loaded with humanitarian aid for Gaza's residents. The head of the Israel Defense Forces' Southern Command would hand control of Gaza to the Arab commanders at a festive ceremony.

But whereas in Lebanon there's at least a strategic foundation for implementing this plan, in Gaza ideology stands like a fortified wall to protect us from it.

Israel boasts that it has destroyed most of Hamas' military capabilities. The

army has already said it could retake control of the Philadelphi corridor or conduct other operations in Gaza even without a massive presence there. In other words, it's already ready to announce the end of the war. Israel has even said that it would be willing to consider the stationing there of a multinational force that would include Arab members.

But then the Palestinian "spoiler" intruded. The United Arab Emirates, which has announced its willingness to participate in a multinational force, set one clear condition for sending its troops: That it be done "at the invitation of a reformed (Palestinian Authority), or a PA led by an empowered prime minister." Under those conditions, Egypt would also be willing to send troops, having already conditioned the reopening of its side of the Rafah border crossing on the Palestinian Authority managing the Gaza side.

And here is where the absurdity lies. Israel is willing to have a significant multinational force stationed in southern Lebanon and to reach agreements with the Lebanese government, even though Hezbollah members

are part of that government. But it is not willing to do so with the Palestinian Authority, even though the PA still maintaining security coordination with Israel.

In Lebanon, Jerusalem is willing to pin its hopes on a multinational force and settle for Hezbollah forces withdrawing to north of the Litani River as proof of Israel's success in lifting the threat and as a necessary and sufficient condition for enabling residents of the north to return home safely, as it promised. But in Gaza, it will "remain as long as necessary," without specifying what criteria will have to be met to ensure the safety of residents of southern Israel.

Israel isn't demanding that the Lebanese government oust Hezbollah members from its ranks, nor does it seek to destroy the basis for the government's civilian rule of the country. But in Gaza, it isn't willing to hear about the PA managing civilian infrastructure, even though that could actually complete the process of destroying Hamas as a civilian government, rather than only as a military force.

The difference between these two theaters is that

Israel's policy in Gaza is dictated by ideology, whereas its policy in Lebanon is dictated by its military needs. Lebanon isn't a "Zionist asset." It's a conventional battlefield in which a military victory can end with a political solution. Gaza, in contrast, is a humiliating historical memory — a Masada that fell when Israel withdrew from it in 2005 and an unprecedented massacre that occurred in southern Israel on October 7 under an Israeli government.

In Gaza, no military victory will erase this historic humiliation, so any talk of a political agreement is seen as capitulation. There is only one way to restore our lost honor — by occupying Gaza forever and making it part of Israel. That is the "appropriate Zionist response."

If for every settler killed by a terrorist in the West Bank a new settlement outpost is built, then in Gaza, in exchange for all of the hostages who have died and all those who will die, we shall expand the borders of our homeland. Because in their deaths, the hostages have willed Gaza to us. That is their testament, and this is the government that has been appointed as the executor of their estate.

Tamir Pardo and Nimrod Novik

PM has chosen the map of the curse

Benjamin Netanyahu's address to the United Nations General Assembly last week is more relevant to our security situation than it might have seemed, and it does not bode well.

Considering the astonishing successes of Israel's military and intelligence forces and the broader implications of these accomplishments, the prime minister's speech was notable for the absence of any strategic doctrine that would enable their translation into sweeping positive changes both close to home and farther away. Even worse, while the speech accurately explained the opportunities, his policies guarantee that they will be missed.

As usual, Netanyahu made use of visual aids, on this occasion two maps representing the choices facing Israel and the region. The first, in bright colors, represents what he called "a map of a blessing" and depicts cooperation among countries that seek stability and progress — including Israel, of course. The second, in dark colors, was of Iran and its proxies — all the actors that foment evil in our neighborhood. They constituted "a map of a curse."

His depiction of reality was correct, but his conclusion was not. The map of the Middle East indeed reflects the existence of two mutually hostile blocs. But through his policies, Netanyahu has deliberately chosen to draw away from integration into the "blessing" bloc and to sentence us to constant conflict with the "curses."

One bloc, led by Iran, uses

violence to undermine stability and then exploits the resultant instability to expand the zone of influence of the ayatollahs' benighted regime. The other bloc — comprising the countries that signed peace agreements with Israel, Egypt and Jordan; the countries that signed the Abraham Accords; Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states — is united both in its anxiety about the Iranian threat and its commitment to regional stability, which is vital for economic growth in the spirit of the Saudi crown prince's Vision 2030 and that of some of his neighbors.

For years now, the "blessing" bloc has been inviting Israel to join its ranks, both in the context of a regional coalition to thwart Iran and its proxies and in order to integrate economic, technological and other capabilities for everyone's benefit. Such integration would include normalizing relations with Saudi Arabia and other Arab and Muslim countries that are awaiting Israel's decision.

At least five members of the regional coalition — Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Saudi Arabia — are hostile to Hamas (and to its parent organization, the Muslim Brotherhood). They accepted Washington's invitation to join the so-called Biden initiative to coordinate action against

Iran, as indeed happened on the night in April when Iran attacked Israel, and would also accept responsibility for managing the Gaza Strip, including stationing ground forces there.

But to realize these intentions, the "map of a blessing" countries need three changes in the Palestinian arena. The first is an end to the war in Gaza, which would enable them to deploy their own forces there in coordination with the departing Israeli troops.

The second, to avoid being painted as an occupying force, is that they can only intervene in response to a request from the party recognized worldwide as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people — the Palestinian Authority. They would then be able to enter Gaza in full coordination with the PA, as a temporary — even if prolonged — solution to the PA's inability to handle the task of running Gaza on its own.

The third change, to reduce the danger that the billions slated to be invested in Gaza will go up in flames in another round of violence, is an Israeli commitment to give the Palestinians a credible political horizon, even if implementing it takes many more years. They argue that such a horizon would also provide an alternative of hope to Hamas' ideology of death, destruction and despair and thereby prevent the terrorist

organization from recruiting a new generation of Palestinians to its ranks.

If any further push were needed to reevaluate the central role the Palestinian issue plays in the eyes of these countries, we received it almost concurrently with Netanyahu's speech, when Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, addressing the UN Security Council, announced that his country had formed an international alliance "to promote the two-state solution." Implementing this solution, he added, "is the best solution to break the cycle of conflict and suffering and enforce a new reality in which the entire region, including Israel, enjoys security and coexistence."

While Israel's government is striving to convince the moderate Arab states (and the Israeli public) that there is no connection between establishing relations with those countries and the Palestinian issue, even states that have already normalized relations with us appear to have reached the opposite conclusion. This is evidenced by the United Arab Emirates' freeze on joint ventures with Israel, the reduction in contact between its government and ours and the new Saudi initiative.

It turns out that the trauma of October 7 and the ensuing war made it clear to many countries, in our region and

beyond, how much damage the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the instability it creates is doing to their vital interests. But even though this is a conflict in a life-or-death matter for us, and placing a border between us and the Palestinians is essential to our future as a Jewish and democratic state, the penny hasn't yet dropped here.

For Arab states, in contrast, their commitment to a two-state solution has moved from lip service to a diplomatic imperative. As Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said clearly, his kingdom "will not establish diplomatic relations with Israel without" progress toward establishing a Palestinian state.

The prime minister's refusal to meet these expectations denies Israel a historic opportunity to join the regional coalition and normalize ties with Saudi Arabia and other states. It also prevents the possibility of fulfilling the supreme goal of bringing the hostages home, while also extricating Israel from the Gaza Strip and thwarting a renewed threat from Hamas. Moreover, the refusal to do what's required to integrate into the "map of blessing" dooms Israel to dealing with the "curse" axis under ever-worsening circumstances. This includes a bloody, continued occupation of the Strip; the

West Bank deteriorating toward a Gaza-like state; peace-seeking states bowing to pressure from inside and out to distance themselves from Israel; growing international isolation including sanctions by international institutions such as the International Court of Justice and the possibility of having to contend with Iran and its proxies alone.

Whether Netanyahu's refusal stems from his dependence on his messianic coalition partners or a worldview that favors the risks of managing the conflict (which brought October 7 upon us) over the challenges of trying to move, cautiously, toward its resolution — his policy marks a dangerous path. Meanwhile, the defense establishment's achievements have granted him the optimal conditions to change course, show initiative and recruit the region to our side.

The Israel Defense Forces and the rest of the defense establishment have bounced back from the failures of October 7, and are proving it every day. The time has come for the politicians to regroup, abandon the strategy that led to the worst disaster in Israel's history and adopt a defense outlook based on a combination of military might and political agreements, both local and regional.

Tamir Pardo, the former director of the Mossad, is a member of the Commanders for Israel's Security movement. Nimrod Novik, the former senior policy adviser to Shimon Peres, is a member of the executive committee of Commanders for Israel's Security.

Amos Schocken

Netanyahu's lies in the United Nations

At the beginning of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech at the United Nations on Friday, he said that he hadn't intended to come to speak because his country is at war, but in the end decided to come in order to refute the lies told about Israel in the speeches of other leaders preceding him. He said he had decided to come and tell the truth. And the truth is that Israel pursues peace, aspires to peace, has made peace and will continue to make peace. But it's confronting cruel enemies who want to destroy it.

The truth is that there's no greater lie than this "truth" of Netanyahu's. Netanyahu has never wanted peace with the Palestinians. In 1995 he incited against then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who signed the Oslo Accords as a first step towards fulfillment of the two-state solution — the only solution that can bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

During his first term, after Rabin's murder, from 1996 to 1999, Netanyahu did only what Israel had committed to prior to his election, and signed the Wye River Memorandum in October 1998, but the agreement wasn't implemented due to complaints from both sides.

In 2009 he was reelected, and served for 12 consecutive years until 2021. During this period he managed to torpedo the attempt by then-U.S. President Barack Obama and his Secretary of State John Kerry to make peace between Israel and the Palestinians. He has never initiated negotiations on his own with the Palestinian Authority about the future of the occupation in the territories. In order to avoid any negotiations with the PA, he humiliated it and strengthened Hamas — so he could say that the PA doesn't represent all the Palestinians.

Netanyahu isn't interested in peace with the Palestinians, because he isn't willing to give up the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. According to the guidelines of his present government, the exclusive right to settlement in all parts of the Land of Israel, including the occupied territories, belongs only to the Jewish people. And the map he presented in his UN speech is from the river to the sea, as the extremists on both sides are demanding.

PA President Mahmoud Abbas says the Palestinian state that he wants to establish must include the areas in the West Bank that were occupied in June 1967, and the Gaza Strip. Netanyahu isn't willing to hear of it, although without an agreement on that, there won't be peace with the Palestinians. According to Netanyahu, the Palestinians aren't allowed to want to establish a state even on an area smaller than that marked on the UN Partition Plan of November 1947.

It should be stressed that Israel violated its promise in the peace agreement with Egypt, and is violating international law when it allows its citizens to live in an occupied area, and allows the distancing from the this area of Palestinians for whom it is designated. There were other lies in Netanyahu's speech. According to him there are two options: one is a blessing of peace and prosperity for Israel, its Arab neighbors and the rest of the world. In this context he devoted particular attention to cooperation between Israel and Saudi Arabia. The other option is a curse, in which Iran and its proxies in various countries will bring about slaughter, bloodletting and

destruction. Netanyahu is concealing the fact that Saudi Arabia is conditioning its cooperation with Israel, the blessing of peace, on the advancement of a solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians by establishing a Palestinian state. Netanyahu is deceiving his listeners by saying that he prefers the blessed solution, because in effect he is preventing it, by his intention of continuing the cruel apartheid regime in the territories and Israel's denial of the Palestinians' rights. It's shocking that this will be the legacy of his tenure: apartheid and terror.

Another lie of Netanyahu's is that we're constantly focused on the sacred mission of freeing the hostages being held in Gaza, and that we won't stop until we bring them all back. The truth is the opposite. Netanyahu isn't willing to do what's required to bring

There's no greater lie than Netanyahu's claim that his gov't wants peace with the Palestinians. He has thwarted all attempts at peace and never initiated negotiations

back the hostages, and several times has prevented Israel's representatives in the negotiations from reaching an agreement, because each time he defined additional Israeli demands that the representatives had been willing to waive. At least he should tell the truth here, rather than lie.

In his speech Netanyahu asked the UN Security Council to renew the sanctions against Iran to prevent it from achieving nuclear capability. But he has ignored a UN Security Council resolution from 2016, which determined that it's forbidden to increase the population of settlers in the occupied territories, even as a result of natural growth; and that we have to dismantle all the settlements established since March 2001; and that the residence of Israeli citizens in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, contradicts international law and a Security Council resolution, and is the main obstacle to the two-state solution and long-term peace.

Sanctions should be imposed on Netanyahu and on ministers in his government who are promoting settlement in the occupied territories, and on the Israeli citizens living in them.

Netanyahu is lying when he accused Abbas of failing to condemn the massacre perpetrated by Hamas on October 7. Abbas said the Palestinians have a right to defend themselves, and condemned the harming of civilians on both sides. Netanyahu is lying when he claims that Abbas is conducting a diplomatic war against Israel's right to exist. Abbas recognizes Israel's right to exist. He is conducting a diplomatic war against the occupation and apartheid. That's his prerogative, and he shouldn't be punished for that.

When Netanyahu mentioned in his speech that the Israeli judicial system is independent and should receive the same treatment from the International Criminal Court prosecutor as do other democracies, he's lying to his listeners, because he's concealing the fact that even now he is conducting a move designed to eliminate the independence of the Israeli judicial system.

ROSH HASHANAH

All dust and ashes

Continued from page 7

protest sign put up by a group called The Families of October 7."

"The Nahal Oz [army] outpost. Here our sons and daughters fell and were abducted. A state commission of inquiry now!"

A battered and bleeding land, thunderstruck and torched, destroyed but still raging, commemorating its sacrifices and protesting. Highway 232 continues south to Kibbutz Kerem Shalom and the Rafah border crossing. Here every road sign reminds us of how we once traveled by bus from Tel Aviv to Cairo, via that crossing. Every memory here is also testimony to the volatile character of this land. From festival to disaster, from disaster to festival.

The Gaza Strip, or at least its heavy and oppressive specter, accompanies you as you drive southward. Every so often one spies ruins in the Strip peeping out between the trees, or on the horizon beyond the peanut fields. From a distance, no signs of life are visible in Gaza. It is a dead land. The sights evoke memories – memories of someone who

Every road sign reminds us of how we once traveled by bus from Tel Aviv to Cairo, via Rafah. Every memory is testimony to the volatile character of this land. From festival to disaster, from disaster to festival.

visited Gaza regularly for years and loved it and its inhabitants. The unending sorrow of every visit to the western Negev is also accompanied by sadness and longing for the Strip, which will never again be what it was before this accursed war. The entrance into it at the Erez crossing, with a terminal that wouldn't shame any international border, is deserted and dusty. Where taxis once waited for the handful of Palestinian patients and merchants who were allowed to leave their overcrowded cage for Israel, and lots of vehicles and laborers, doctors and journalists jostled with each other – there are now only tanks and armored personnel carriers. The crossing is closed, perhaps forever.

While Sderot is now erecting its monument, at the Re'im park it was virtually built by itself almost from day one following the disaster. When we got there, two days later, wrecked cars were strewn along the roadside with personal possessions spilling out: tents, picnic equipment and children's games in a place that had been buzzing with life before being turned in an instant into a killing field. A Toyota pickup with Gaza plates stood in the wadi that emerges from the park, when we visited last year. At the entrance to the adjacent Kibbutz Re'im, two Toyotas were parked next to each other, packages of dates and bottles of water from Gaza were in the back; rolled-up prayer rugs, like the yoga mats we saw at the Nova festival, were in the passenger cabin. The machine guns in the front had already been removed.

Now the Nova site is the central memorial locus, even though it's still improvised and temporary. Maybe that's

its strength. An avenue of portraits of the 364 people killed there, with thousands of visitors every day. There isn't a soldier who hasn't been brought here. When we visited last week, too, the site was teeming. Where the bar stood during the party, where I saw bottles of alcohol still on the counters last time, a tent now stands in which a Torah scroll is being written "for the ascent of the soul of those murdered at Nova, from the people of Israel." It's difficult to think of a greater contrast than that between the cans of Red Bull I saw at the bar, and the bearded men who are now scurrying about in the air-conditioned "Torah tent" that has been erected on the carnage.

Another group is busy creating the Re'im Flag – a huge installation in memory of those who were murdered. Arab workers are paving an access road leading to the place, lending it the air of a Tel Aviv construction site. "You are in the Nova compound. Please be aware that this area is under rocket threat," warns a poster, a reminder that the war has achieved nothing to date. A group of soldiers, men and women, kneel next to one of the pictures of the murdered, lighting memorial candles, their eyes tearing up.

But you will see no tears in the eyes of Avi Klingbail, who's waiting for us on Kibbutz Nir Oz. At 80, he's youthful and vigorous, dividing his time over the past year between his ravaged kibbutz and his temporary dwellings – first in an Eilat hotel and now in an apartment in Carmei Gat, a neighborhood in the Negev city of Kiryat Gat. When we visited here last year, he was showing a group of engineers around the wreckage. He had refused to leave the kibbutz and remained there almost alone. The murderous invaders from Gaza stole his old wheelbarrow and bicycle. He and his wife, Haya, were trapped in their safe room for 10 hours on a kibbutz that no soldier or police officer reached for half a day of blood-chilling terror. Imagine it.

Nir Oz lies in ruins. A year has passed and nothing has been removed, not one house has been rebuilt. Other than plywood covering the windows to prevent looting, nothing has changed. The Tekuma Authority, the government agency responsible for rebuilding the Gaza-border communities, has decided that 71 homes will be completely demolished and rebuilt; the kibbutzniks think that 100 need to be razed. In the meantime, planning is underway for the new kibbutz that will arise here in place of the one that was hit hard-



A mural on a building near the site of Sderot's police station. "Why didn't they ask us first about it? They could've informed us, said something," a resident complains.



The site of the Nova rave. There's no greater contrast than that between the cans of Red Bull I saw at the bar a year ago, and the bearded men scurrying in the "Torah tent."

Photos by Moti Milrod.

est of all, relative to its size, and was abandoned to its fate more than all the other kibbutzim in the area.

Haya suggests that we go to see the squills, heralds of autumn, that are in bloom on the way to the cemetery. She also recommends stopping at the cactus garden tended by Oded Lifshitz, 84, who is among those being held hostage in the Strip. "We don't want to be forgotten," Avi says as we walk along the paths. Next to the Lifshitz home, which was torched, is a house of death slated for demolition soon. In this neighborhood more people were taken captive than murdered.

What will become of this kibbutz is still unclear. Meanwhile, life in Carmei Gat bodes well. Veteran member Klingbail bemoans the fact that his kibbutz was conservative in its approach over the years, the second-to-last kibbutz to drop the system of children's houses, which led to a situation in which most of its membership was quite old. "Because of that policy, we lost a few years in which we could have gotten young, new members," he says. "We are an old kibbutz, average age about 70." If they had been less stringent about their ascetic, rigid way of communal life, young people would have come. "The kind of kibbutz we were in the past will never exist again," he adds. "We'll have to knock down the walls, we'll be more of a cooperative community."

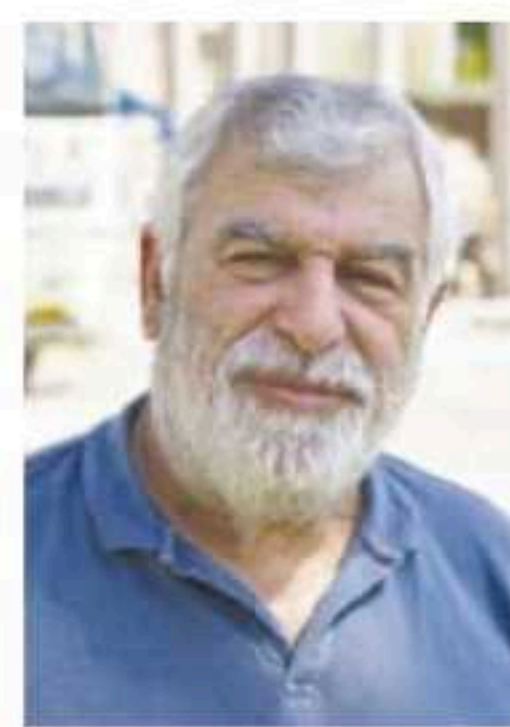
"For every house that's standing on Nir Oz, two were destroyed," Klingbail tells us. He estimates that about 20 percent of his former neighbors won't return. He himself clings to the place and has even tried to organize a system whereby each member spends one night a week on the kibbutz – in a display of what the Palestinians call *sumud*, steadfastness. But this kibbutz-style *sumud* has failed.

"The center of our life isn't here now. There are also members who were hit brutally and aren't capable of coming back," he says. His vision: Two and a half years from now, there will be a more beautiful kibbutz here than before. We ask if his political views have changed.

"Sivan [his daughter, editor of Haaretz's business paper TheMarker] brought me people on a tour from Eli [a West Bank settlement], the source of all the evil. They asked me if my viewpoint had changed. Why should it change? I am not driven by [a desire for] revenge. America dropped an atom bomb on Japan and two months later started to rehabilitate Japan. They didn't want to oppress the Japanese. They wanted to cooperate with them. My approach hasn't changed. I would organize a global fund and rehabilitate Gaza."

We try to get a glimpse of Gaza and climb onto the roof of a burned-out hulk of a house, the one closest to the border, and spy the wreckage of homes in Khirbat Ikhza'a across the way. The house under us was built for a kibbutznik with special needs. Only the safe room in this structure, whose patio faces west, still stands. "On this patio Amitay would sit to watch the sunset," a memorial plaque states. This was the home of Amitay Ben Zvi and his caregiver, Jimmy Pacheco. First the terrorists began to destroy the building, then they murdered Amitay in his wheelchair, snatched Jimmy and burned the structure down. Jimmy returned from captivity after 49 days.

What did Amitay think when he sat here and watched the sun set beyond Khirbat Ikhza'a? We will never know. In the peanut fields of Nir Oz, Thai workers who have returned are gathering the harvest. A small vineyard can be seen across from Amitay's torched house. In the sculptures and cactus garden tended by Oded and Yocheved Lifshitz – she too was abducted but was released in November – there's a road sign that was brought here from a different place,



Elisha Dahan (above): 'You keep coming back to the question: My God in heaven, how did they get this far? It's incomprehensible. It will stay with us for the rest of our lives.'

directing people to the former Katif bloc of settlements in the Strip. Dozens of the dead are now at rest in the small cemetery. Whole families, parents and children, freshly dug graves.

In neighboring Kibbutz Be'eri, there's a funeral now almost every day. Most of the 102 people who were murdered there were initially buried far away. Ahead of their first yearzeit they are now being laid to eternal rest, one after another. About 200 of the 1,000 residents have returned, the rest are moving into a new neighborhood built for Be'eri refugees on Kibbutz Haterim where they will be housed for a few years, outside Be'er Sheva. Seventy families have already moved there. Be'eri has a spokesperson and every visit has to be coordinated with her and includes a guide from the

kibbutz. There's also a form to be filled out in advance. Our guide is Lior Alon, who spent no fewer than 16 hours in the safe room of his torched house on October 7, together with his wife, two of their daughters and one of their boyfriends. A sojourn in hell whose traces are clearly etched on him.

"I used to be a quiet person," says Alon, who's in charge of sports activities on the kibbutz, recounting the horrors of that day in an almost unstoppable stream of words. Over the past year he has guided hundreds of groups, thousands of people, and the job is like a balm to him: to tell and retell the torment of that day. He also forced himself to spend one night in the safe room of his gutted house, as a corrective experience. It helped him, he says.

In Be'eri almost every house is a disaster area. Alon recounts the calamities in harrowing detail. The rubble has been cleared from only two or three multi-story buildings and from the kibbutz's decimated art gallery. All the rest remains dust and ashes. The last time we were here, a pickup truck from Gaza was still parked not far away and soldiers slept in the dining room.

A copy of Haaretz from October 6, 2023, lay on the kitchen table in one of the homes we visited last year, opened to political commentator Yossi Verter's weekly column, as though waiting for someone to come back and finish reading it. It's very unlikely that the person who read it is among the living today.

"On Saturday morning, maybe he only got up from the table for an instant," I wrote about the possible reader, at the time, "leaving behind the column and the coffee – but apparently he will never return." A trail of blood led from the safe room to the garden then, where terrorists apparently dragged someone dead or wounded. The corpse of a dog with lovely, light-colored fur lay in the garden; another canine corpse lay a few meters away. Sights I will never forget.

One day I got a call from Merav Svirsky, an impressive woman, who told me that the house I had described a year ago with the newspaper was that of her parents. Rafi Svirsky was a year ahead of me at the Ironi Aleph High School in Tel Aviv. I didn't know him. He was murdered in this house. Now Alon leads me inside. A cat that was sprawled on a scorched chair in the garden skitters away as we approach.

SALVATION

Continued from page 10

whether the religious leadership should be permitted to reshape the general Israeli public sphere.

This is what Haredi leaders are aiming for making demands to expand separate academic programs for men and for women in their community to include master's degree studies as well, and when they condition Haredi conscription on military service that is "sterile of women." This is what religious-Zionist basketball coaches seek when they demand that girls be kept on the bench when their boys' teams play against a co-ed team.

Policymakers including Minister of Education Yoav Kish, members of the Council for Higher Education and the IDF's Personnel Directorate are making a critical error when they accommodate such demands, assuming that if they compromise on gender equality just a bit, they will win the cooperation and trust of the Haredi and extreme religious-Zionist publics and their leaders. But the experience of the past 15 years demonstrates exactly the opposite: Every concession on such issues leads to even stricter and broader demands. Initially, men and women were seated separately at various shows and concerts; now seat-

ing in separate rows in some theater halls begins at the age of 3. Initially, there were separate B.A.-level studies for men and women; now the demand, as noted, is for segregation at the M.A. level. In the past, there were separate swimming hours for men and women at beaches and pools; now the government is trying to enforce segregation at natural springs in national parks.

In contrast to these examples of "over-accommodation," the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipality was right to refuse the request of singers Sharon Rotter and Din Din Aviv to perform before a women-only audience at a municipal venue. A lawsuit submitted by the two singers in October 2023 recently ended in a settlement allowing the concert to be held as a one-time event. It is likely that the municipality agreed to the settlement in order to avoid setting a precedent for other single-sex events.

The unique and empowering nature inherent in women-only spaces and events should be left to activities that do not depend on public resources. If today men cannot purchase a ticket to women-only shows and concerts, tomorrow women will be barred from attending events performed for men – all in the name of so-called progressive and tolerant multiculturalism.

In this context, a clarification must be added with respect to the Israeli Arab community, where Islamic practices of sex separation and regulating

women's modesty are often enforced in public events. The defiant question, "Why aren't you protesting the fact that the public pool in Rahat (the largest Bedouin city) only permits men and women to swim during separate hours?" has often been directed at me and other activists as we have fought gender segregation over the years. We, as well as the state prosecutor and the

The encroachment on the liberty and equality of women and members of the LGBTQ communities is a central means, as well as a goal, of the political forces determined to undermine Israel's democracy.

attorney general, have been accused of a double standard and inconsistency. It has been argued that the fact that legal regulations and proceedings have been focused on gender separation in Haredi and religious Zionist communities indicates hypocrisy and hostility vis-a-vis Judaism, for – claim the accusers – Muslims are permitted what Jews are not.

This criticism is unfounded. Where gender segregation is prohibited, it applies to both Jews and Arabs. Thus, for example, the High Court's ruling that Kiryat Arba's local council must also open its swimming pool for mixed swimming equally applies to Rahat's pool, and the prohibition of erecting a barrier in Rabin Square at a 2018 Chabad event that was also subject to public controversy and legal proceedings also applies to barriers at events for the Muslim public at Charles Clore Park near Jaffa. However, Arab society and its leaders are not Israel Zaira. First of all, the separation between men and women at their events often occurs spontaneously without barriers, ushers or signs. More importantly, the Arab community does not aspire to expand the practice of segregation and impose it on the rest of Israeli society.

In summary, the issue of gender segregation is volatile and divisive, mainly because it is experienced as a matter that concerns their core political and social identity. Every side in this heated debate believes that it is critical to address this issue and that wrong decisions would dramatically threaten their community, their way of life and their future here. Such debate often gives rise to a desire to acknowledge that both sides have valid points. But there are issues where this desire cannot be accommodated. Some problems, despite their complexity, should have clear and uncompromising answers.



MK Son Har-Melech. Draws a connection between Jewish supremacist ideology and the campaign to promote gender segregation and women's "modesty!"

Oliver Fuassi

Gender segregation is one of them. It is too soon to analyze all the implications of the current battle over the nature of Israeli society. However, even now, it is clear that the encroachment on the liberty and equality of women and members of the LGBTQ communities is a central means, as well as a goal, of the political forces determined to undermine Israel's democracy.

It would be a grave error not to in-

clude gender-related issues as a major axis in any analysis of current events and in every discussion concerning the character and future of the country.

Dr. Yofi Tirosh is a member of the Tel Aviv University's Faculty of Law and a research fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute. This article is an excerpt from Tirosh's forthcoming book, to be published in Hebrew by the Berl Katznelson Press.

Israel's AI Sector is Redefining Success Amidst Adversity



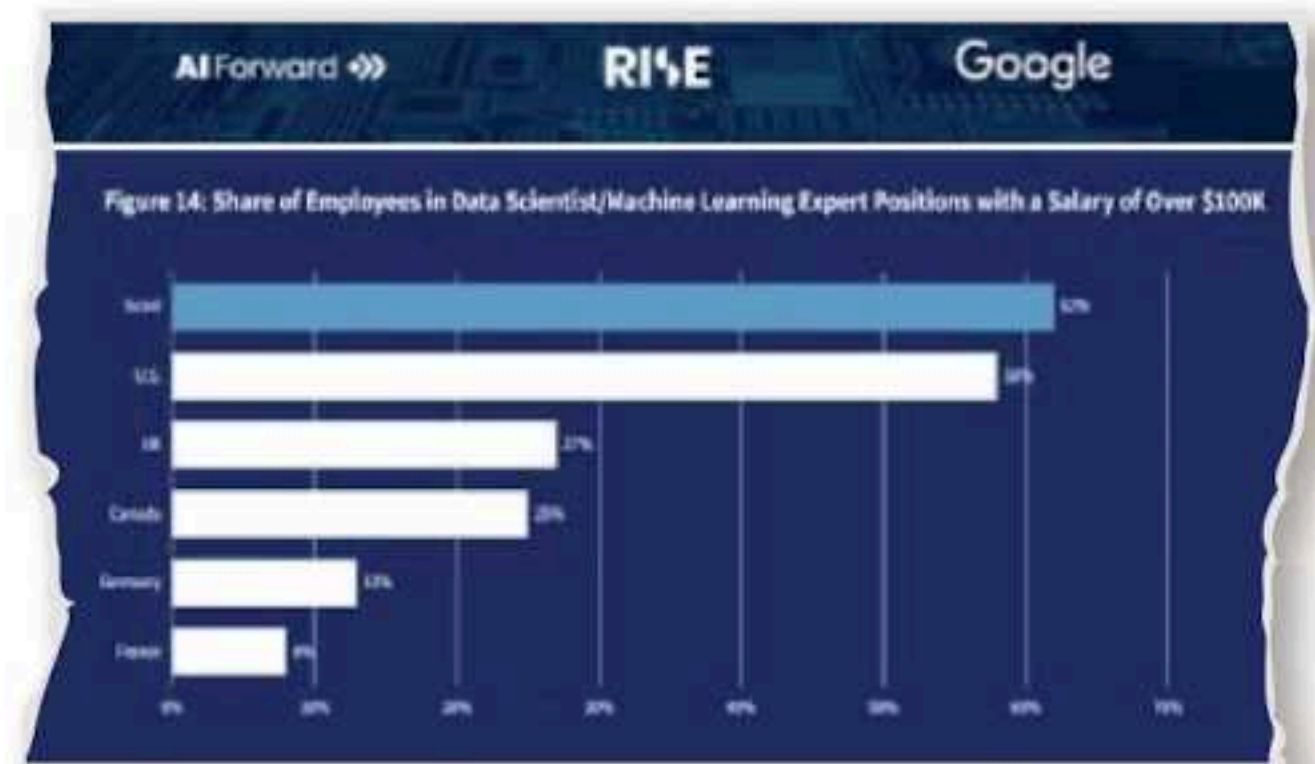
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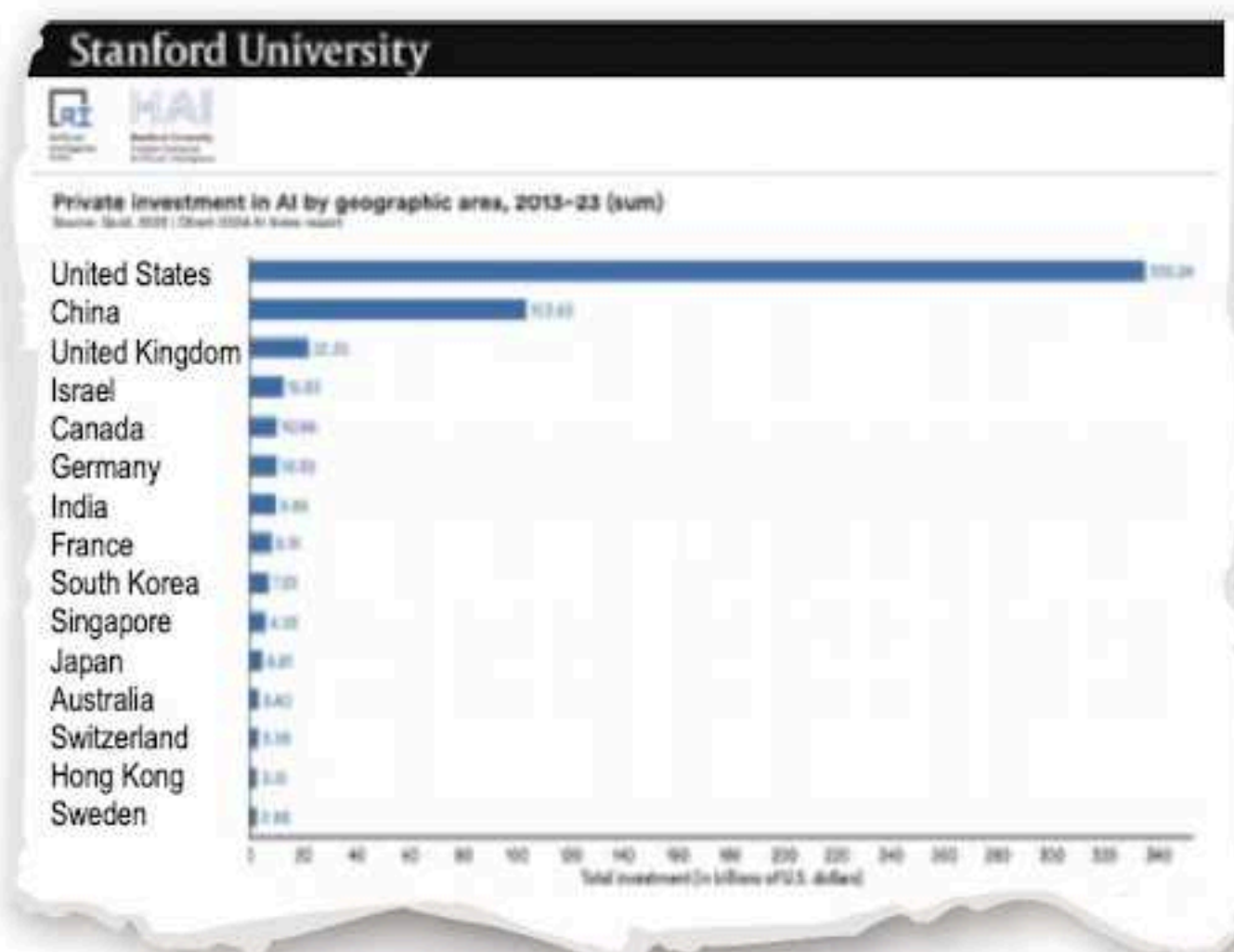
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ROSH HASHANAH

POWER

Continued from page 9

wrote: "With a curse, with a prayer, with love, pull the trigger: Slaughter, slaughter, slaughter... Around you glitter the imbecile eyes of the Nile dogs - into the Nile, dogs, into the Nile!"

This form of speech was not unusual for Kovner. Gaius Tene notes that the word "liberty" appears four times in the combat pages over 25 years and four wars, and the word "democracy" only once. A similar picture exists in later years.

In his speech following the start of the war, on October 12, Netanyahu achieved a new level of dehumanization by the lack of distinction he drew between Hamas terrorists and the rest of the population in Gaza. "Today, against the enemy, with the ancient command, 'Remember what Amalek did to you' ringing in our ears, today we are uniting forces in order to ensure the eternity of Israel." This could be taken to imply that killing of Gazans as such, from infants to the aged, is not only permitted, it's a commandment, as per I Samuel: 15:3.

"Nile dogs," "two-legged beasts," "Amalek" - these are but a few examples of the transformation of the Arab to sub-human in Hebrew. And thus, if at the time of the 1982 war in Lebanon, when Christian Phalangist forces perpetrated a pogrom in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, large numbers of Israelis came out to the public square to protest and demand an investigation; whereas today there are Israelis who attack trucks that are bringing humanitarian aid to the residents of Gaza, with little protest being heard from speakers of Hebrew.

How does a person lose hope, cast off the political struggle and choose to become a terrorist? Perhaps the most telling story to illustrate this process is that of Marwan Barghouti.

Barghouti, who was the leader of Fatah's Tanzim militia and of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade during the second intifada, is currently serving five life terms plus 40 years in prison for involvement in murder and in dozens of terrorist attacks. Yet, prior to that, when he was chairman of the Students Union at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, he embarked on his political career as an ardent supporter of the two-state idea and a solution of the conflict via peaceful means and dialogue.

As a student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the mid-1980s, I tried to establish, through the aegis of the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation think tank, a joint Israeli-Palestinian research group, with the aim of discussing the history of Palestine in the

modern era. Generally, Palestinian academics refrained (and continue to refrain) from being in contact with their Israeli counterparts. Barghouti, whom I met through Faisal Hussein, a leading Palestinian politician, took a different approach.

We met a number of times at Bir Zeit University and we spoke at length. He was an intense, sophisticated and charismatic person, like me in his late 20s, who had already spent some years in Israeli prisons; but in place of bitterness, the lost years in prison had generated in him a determination to exchange views with Israelis. Barghouti possessed independence and public courage that I haven't encountered in other Palestinian leaders, older and more senior than he. At one stage he recruited a number of Palestinian students to the research group, although he himself did not take part in it.

If our leaders cannot express recognition of Palestinian life as equal to Jewish life, and a sweeping objection to violence-based solutions, no change in relations between the two peoples is likely.

One day, suddenly, the meetings between the groups were broken off and I could no longer reach him by phone. I went to Bir Zeit to find out why. When I got there, I encountered Barghouti's deputy. "Haven't you heard?" he said. "Barghouti was expelled by your country to Jordan." He invited me to a poetry slam that was taking place that day on the campus. I arrived at an auditorium that was completely packed. Students, women and men, ascended and descended the stage, singing-reading long poems filled with emotion from their heart's blood. "What are they singing about?" I asked, astounded. "Are they love poems?" "They are singing about the occupation," he replied, and translated some of the poems. A few months later, in December 1987, the first intifada broke out. Bir Zeit University was one of its leading centers.

Barghouti returned to the West Bank after the signing of the Oslo Accords, in September 1993, and was one of their most devoted and most important supporters. However, after he concluded that they had failed and that Israel would never agree to an independent Palestinian state, he chose, in the end,

the path of violent resistance and terrorism.

His shift must raise questions about his personal consistency and the flexibility of his moral core. To this day, his supporters depict him as a Palestinian Nelson Mandela, as a revered patriot who had no choice but to embark on the road of terrorism, while failing to point out that Mandela, in a short career of sabotage, refrained from harming people and only targeted property and structures of the apartheid regime.

If deep mistrust and suspicion form the fabric of the relations between Israelis and Palestinians, it's doubtful whether a figure like Barghouti is the solution rather than part of the problem. Much the same can be said about Israel's future leadership: If it cannot express sincere recognition of the value of Palestinian life as equal to Jewish life, and a sweeping objection to violence-based solutions, no change in relations between the two peoples is likely to come about.

But it also has to be admitted that during the time that has passed between Barghouti of the 1980s and Barghouti of the early 2000s, and between Barghouti and Yahya Sinwar (and previously also Mohammed Deif and Ismail Haniyeh), the struggle between Israel and the Palestinians has undergone a sea change. On one side is a state whose government is savaging its ministries and a civil service that was built up over decades, and is harming the functioning of essential organizations like the police, the judiciary and the army. On the other side is a weak Palestinian Authority, which has lost its hold on part of the territory, rests on a government of cronyism and corruption and has the confidence of very few among its public.

The more that the politics and the state (or pre-state) institutions - on both sides - implode upon themselves, the more that extremist forces will take over the agenda, particularly under the aegis of a nationalist-territorial and messianic interpretation of religion, fostering a general struggle between two populations over all the land between the sea and the Jordan River, to life or death.

A few years ago, I was in a café with a close friend, someone I've known for more than 40 years who like me fought in the March 1978 Litani operation, Israel's first invasion of Lebanon. Our political views are generally divergent, so sometimes we talk about ourselves, about family and friends, or about martial arts. He is a former Israeli champion in Krav Maga, I am an eternal novice in karate. But on that day I'd spoken in a university seminar about Qibya and about Leibowitz's article, and I told him about it. Gazing at me with his soft, blue eyes, he said, "Chow-



A solidarity rally in Ramallah in the West Bank in August, in support of Palestinians in Israeli custody. It's doubtful whether a figure like Barghouti is the solution rather than part of the problem. Nasser Nasser/AP

ers, did I never tell you that the woman who was murdered with her children in Yehud, back then in 1953, was my grandmother, Sultana?"

Revenge and violence possess a cyclical character, we know: One side strikes and then the other, until the cycle becomes a downward spiral, with bloodshed at its base that encloses everyone; in our region, Gaza is the edge of the cone. A few years after the attack in Yehud and the operation in Qibya, Roi Rotberg was murdered at Kibbutz Nahal Oz, as part of the actions by the Fedayeen in that period, and Moshe Dayan delivered the well-known eulogy at his graveside. A few months later, in the Sinai Operation (October-November 1956), the Gaza Strip was conquered by Israel for the first time. Nine years later, it was conquered again.

In a masterly article in Haaretz in 1981, the journalist and writer Amos Elon noted that south of Omar al-Mukhtar, the main street of Gaza City, is a cemetery. "Its place precisely here," he wrote, "seems to demonstrate and illustrate the fact that the boundary between life and death in Gaza is barely like a transition between street and sidewalk."

One's hope is that in the future, the

Palestinians, in their legitimate struggle for freedom, will reject the path of jihadist terrorism, which enjoys broad support among them, and that they will uproot the culture from which the murderousness of Hamas sprang; that their national ethos will strive more for the establishment of a state and less for the realization of the right of return; and that they will accept fully the right of the Jews to a state of their own in the Land of Israel.

But the State of Israel, too, for its part, has shown no interest, certainly not over the past decade or longer, in creating a different human reality between the Jordan and the sea. On the contrary: The present government in particular promises the continuation of the cycles of revenge and destruction, which are becoming ever more fierce, among other ways by the deepening of the fundamentalist and symbolic character of the conflict (by having members of that government visit the Temple Mount, for example), and as such its expanding it to the wider Muslim world; by the heightened seizure of Palestinian land and by allowing the complete unraveling of the rule of law in the West Bank, while sowing fear and terror there; and by transforming all Arabs, without exception, into eter-

nal enemies because of their origin, their identity, their race.

One of the last chapters of the Book of Joshua, which is generally a grim and bloody tale of the conquest and annihilation of peoples, recounts the establishment of cities of refuge for those who mistakenly commit murder. These cities are open to Jews and strangers alike, and their entire purpose is to prevent cycles of blood redemption and endless settling of accounts between the different residents of the land. One of these cities of refuge is the city of the Patriarchs, Kiryat Arba (Joshua 21:13).

Today a resident of that city, the national security minister, is promoting a vision of Jewish power that normalizes violence, expansionism and racism, as if they were bread and water. Of this the Jewish-German philosopher Walter Benjamin said that in an era of fascism, the scenes of human suffering and the ethical lessons of the past pass by each other, not touching, and even the dead are not safe.

Prof. Eyal Chowers teaches at Tel Aviv University's School of Political Science. He is one of the editors of the book "Thinking About the University: Knowledge, Politics and Academia in Israel" (Tel Aviv University Press, 2024; in Hebrew).

Daniel Livshin, 24; lives in Tel Aviv; flying to Bangkok

What are you going to be doing in Thailand?

Vacationing. I was discharged from the army two days ago.

From where?

I don't think it's a good idea to say. Did you grow up in Tel Aviv?

No. I've only lived there for a year. I grew up in Ashkelon. So I also have had a little of the Tel Aviv experience, leaving the periphery.

What's it like moving from Ashkelon to Tel Aviv?

It's a different atmosphere; people are different. I really love the whole Tel Aviv lifestyle of sitting in cafés and going to parties. The city is alive. No matter what time you go out, there's always something to do. I also tried to exploit all the attractions in Tel Aviv to the hilt. I surfed and I also got into working out in a gym.

Sounds like you've sort of betrayed your hometown.

I totally agree with you. Like, friends of mine from home tell me I've really changed, and when I'm with them I really do feel different, because I have a somewhat different take on life from them, which is weird. Friends of mine from home truly see the change.

In what way have you changed, in their view?

Once I get home things are a little different - I get back into the atmosphere of the place. But they laugh at me because I don't like riding in a car and would rather be on a scooter. There was a time when I wouldn't be without the car. They also aren't happy with the fact that I'm not a political person. When they come to Tel Aviv and see the demonstrations, it really disgusts them. I get that because where I came from, everyone is really right-wing. And actually, I don't feel I have enough of a political opinion to say who's right and who's not.

As someone who's really not on either side but lives with both sides, how do you see the period we're going through?

In the end there's "anti" from both sides. That's what I think. There's anti from their side, who hate the right, and from the other side they hate the left, and that's what it's become. Just two blocs that hate each

Departures | Arrivals



other, like two soccer teams. That's how I see it.

Whom will you miss in Israel when you're away?

My family. It's tough because I've never been away for a long period. For my little sisters. I have a sister who's 9; suddenly, I won't see her for two months. I'm haven't digested that completely. We don't have a brother-sister relationship, because the age difference is pretty big. I feel like she's my little daughter.

Do you feel that she's part of a different generation?

Yes, absolutely. In my time there was ICQ, not TikTok. She's a lot more aware of trends and things like that. Just an example: She was in a jewelry store and knew everything about everything. Things I didn't know when I was 9. I had nowhere to get updates from, and here she's exposed not to one place in Ashkelon but really to the whole world, to everything happening in the world.

Would you have liked to grow up like that?

On the one hand yes, because you're exposed to so many things in the world that you don't know. On the other hand, I don't know. It tortures you a little, makes you aware of

certain things at a really young age. These kids' opinions can be distorted from the content they see, they can be changed more easily.

Are you worried about your sister?

No. In the end, every generation thinks the generation that follows theirs is terrible, but in the end it turns out that everyone manages pretty well.

You said you've never been far from your family for such a long period. Are your parents taking it hard?

They made aliyah from the Soviet Union at the age of 16, alone, so they understand pretty well that everybody person moves ahead in their own world.

Do you speak Russian?

I sputter in Russian. I can understand it, but to speak... I speak with my grandmother a little.

What's it like being the son of people who came from the Soviet Union as teenagers?

Because they came at a relatively young age, there wasn't too much of a feeling of being new immigrants. It didn't affect me in school. New immigrants usually hang out in their own groups, and I didn't like that they were speaking a foreign language. I just wanted to be part of everyone.

Shir Reuven, Photos by Tomer Appelbaum



Yakira Kdoshim, 49 (third from left), and Shalva Kuperman-Ginott, 47 (hugging the two boys), both live in Jerusalem; arriving from Batumi, Georgia

Are you sisters?

Yakira: Yes.

Shalva and Yakira - very interesting names.

Yakira: Only the girls got interesting names. The boys' names are more banal. My parents belonged to the American Jewish community, but wanted Israeli names because it was clear to them that one day they'd make aliyah. They did that when I was 6 and Shalva was 4.

What were you doing in Batumi?

Shalva: My grandfather died this year, at the ripe old age of 102. We persuaded my mother to enjoy the money she inherited. She loves traveling, she's traveled half the world, and this package deal to Batumi was a kosher one, so it worked out that the family could go, enjoy themselves a little and celebrate Grandpa's life, rather than his death.

You're somewhere on the religious spectrum, right?

Shalva: We are Jerusalemite-religious. It means more of an open mind, maybe more modern. There's something in Jerusalem that allows people to live and let live more than in religious communities in other places, which have social codes. Like places where everyone dresses in a specific way. In Jerusalem you can be on the so-called spectrum. I say a blessing over the bread on Shabbat. I want my children to grow up with ceremonies that aren't led only by men, but still within the bounds of Orthodoxy. In Jerusalem no one will raise an eyebrow about such things, but in Orthodox communities elsewhere it can be very different. I think it's very specific to the Baka neighborhood, where we live. We have all the types of minyanim [prayer communities] - the first egalitarian Sephardi minyan was in Baka. It's a very pluralistic neighborhood, and it's important to preserve that.

Yakira: Our children will apparently not be able to live in Jerusalem, because the cost of living there is simply insane. Employment isn't a simple matter, either, but for us the city is a real home.

Shalva: If I want a feeling of vitality, I go to Tel Aviv or to Mea She'arim. Because Mea She'arim is also a place that

never sleeps, although I hang out there less. I find that there is depth and gravitas in Jerusalem, and I love that. I think that every encounter with the Other makes us better. In Tel Aviv people are all like one another, in my view.

Well, it's a year of much pain, because of the differences between people.

Shalva: I am simply grieving. It's a year of sorrow. Not Bibi, yes Bibi - in my view the story is simple: What kind of country we want to be, and what kind of people we want to be. At the moment we are simply grieving, with a deep wound that won't heal until 101 people are back home, until the evacuees in the north return home. Is there a long-term solution? I don't know. In my opinion, we need at the very least to aspire to be true to ourselves - what we want to be - and not for someone else to dictate our identity.

What do you mean by someone else dictating our identity?

Shalva: A lot of people say that now, after October 7, we understand where we're living, and now we have to comport ourselves according to the local codes. And I say that that's not good enough. It's not what I want to be. Do I need to be more cautious? More aggressive? Maybe. But I want to keep the compassion, the love, the things that for me are Judaism.

You missed the celebrations over the death of Nasrallah. People drank arak in TV studios, distributed baklava.

Shalva: Rejoice not when your enemy falls, even if he is totally evil. (A) We don't know who will take his place. (B) Three hundred people died with him. Maybe they were also totally evil. Still, there's no need to rejoice. I think that if women were running things, there'd be more complexity to the discourse. Weapons aren't the only solution. Not that we don't need them. But if women were involved in the decision making, we might not be in this situation. Like if the spotters [who warned about the dangers posed by Hamas] had been heeded, or any different way of thinking at all listened to, the state of affairs might be different. Right now, the thinking is the same thinking. Someone needs to come out of the box for a minute.

There is something very naturally feminist about you both.

Yakira: We never saw ourselves that way.

Do you think that your outlook is connected to your roots in America?

Shalva: Yes, because there's equality there, and acceptance of the Other, at a far deeper level. Sometimes at a somewhat too extreme level.

Television



CHANNEL KAN 11 (Y11A/H11)

06.00 Now and on Other Days - A nostalgic journey into Israel's past **06.30** This Morning - with Arieh Golan **08.00** Current affairs with Hena Shochat & Professor Yuval Ebashan **09.00** Friday Coffee - with Kere Utzan & Yigal Adika **11.00** Close to the Plate - with Shaul Amsterdamski **12.00** The Food Ambassadors - with Chef Barak Yehezkel (s.3) **13.05** A special Kaan Gimel and Kaan News summary of the year in Israeli music in Israel **15.00** Carpool Karaoke - Udi Kagan takes Iriti Lider on a wild car ride **15.25** One Song - A television adaptation of successful Israeli songs **16.00** Memory Bites - Cooking with Chef Barak Yehezkel **16.25** Holiday Special - with Moria Kor **17.00** Special news broadcast **17.30** Cooking with comedian Tom Yarar **18.20** A Present for the Holiday - with musician Sharanan Streett **18.55** Kupa Rasht - Israeli comedy series (s.4) **19.20** Sofa Stories - Celebrates share experiences from their personal lives **19.50** The Evening News **21.00** Zehu-Zeh - Satire **21.30** Carpool Karaoke - Udi Kagan takes Yasmin Muelem on a wild car ride **21.55** One Song - A television adaptation of successful Israeli songs **22.25** Marking the 50th Anniversary of the Tslily HaAdud band **23.30** News Flash **23.35** Through the Music - Yoav Kutner interviews Avihu Medina **00.05** Hatsh HaGadol - Moshe Lahav performs in the Gray Club in Tel Aviv **02.15** Zehu-Zeh - Satire

KESHET (Y12/H12)

06.00 News Flash **06.10** Six O'Clock - with Galit & Yoav **07.00** News Flash **07.05** This Morning - with Galit & Yoav **10.05** Almost Rosh Hashana - with Avi Kukan **11.10** Celebrating the Holiday - with Shiri Rahav **12.05** The Room - with Muky Tsar & Assaf Inbari **15.20** Celebrating the Holiday - Cooking special for Rosh Hashana **14.00** Galit & Itanit **16.00** Cooking with Heroes - with Almaz Mangata **19.00** The Greatest Moments in Israeli Television: Entertainment **19.55** The Evening News **21.00** New Year, New Hope hosted by Avi Glad **00.00** The Greatest Moments in Israeli Television: Music

RESHET (Y13/H13)

06.00 The Morning Show - with Omer Yardeni & Rotem Israel **09.30** News Flash **09.35** Starting the Day - with Elad & Yarden **10.00** News Flash **10.05** Starting the Day (cont.) **11.00** News Flash **11.05** Starting the Day (cont.) **12.00** Gagalit Ezer Menikim Haim - Fundraising for the Medicine and Joy Association, hosted by Menachem Tokar **16.00** From East to West - Cooking **16.40** My Brother is Getting Married - Following the wedding of Bar & Elhav from the "Big Brother" **17.00** News Flash **17.05** My Brother is Getting Married (cont.) **17.35** Game of Chefs - Reality **18.00** News Flash **18.05** Game of Chefs (cont.) **18.45** The World's Best Dishes with Israel Aharoni and Gidi Gov **19.50** The News **21.00** Don't Drop the Million - Game Show **21.55** The w's - Israeli comedy series (s.2) **23.25** Game of Chefs - Reality (2 eps) **01.50** This Evening with Ben Ben Baruch

HOT 3 (H3)

08.10 The Inheritance **08.50** Hotel Portofino (s.3) **09.45** Connected (s.11) **10.15** New Amsterdam **11.30** The Inheritance **11.45** A Place to Call Home **12.00** New Amsterdam **13.10** Hotel Portofino (s.3) **14.05** Connected (s.11, 9 eps) **18.15** A Place to Call Home **19.00** The Inheritance **19.45** New Amsterdam **20.30** Big Mood (2 eps) **21.20** A Place to Call Home **22.05** Indal **22.50** Fellow Travelers **23.45** Big Mood (2 eps) **00.40** Hotel Portofino (s.3) **01.35** Indal **02.20** Fellow Travelers

HOT HBO (H4)

10.00 Hacks (s.2) **10.35** Succession **11.30** Wisting (s.2) **12.20** The Long Shadow **13.10** Silicon Valley (s.4) **13.40** Hacks (s.2) **14.20** Succession **15.15** Wisting (s.2) **16.00** The Long Shadow **16.50** Silicon Valley (s.5) **17.25** Succession **18.25** Wisting (s.2) **19.10** The Long Shadow **20.00** Silicon Valley (s.5) **20.30** Hacks (s.3) **21.10** My Brilliant Friend (s.4) **22.00** A Gentleman in Moscow **22.45** Tulsa King **23.30** Boardwalk Empire (s.4) **08.25** Sex and the City (s.3) **00.50** My Brilliant Friend (s.4) **01.45** A Gentleman in Moscow **02.30** Boardwalk Empire (s.4)

HOT ZONE (H5)

06.25 Chicago Fire (s.10) **07.05** The Rookie (s.3, 5 eps) **10.40** Chicago Med (s.7, 5 eps) **14.10** Blue Bloods (s.11, 5 eps) **17.45** Chicago Fire (s.3, 5 eps) **21.10** CSI: Vegas (s.3, 5 eps) **00.40** FBI: International (s.3, 5 eps)

HOT CHANNEL 8 (H8)

06.00 Eternal You **07.25** Strangest Things (s.2, 2 eps) **09.00** The Politics of Food - Meet **09.40** Bending Light **10.35** Eternal You **12.00** Strangest Things (s.2, 2 eps) **13.35** The Politics of Food - Meet **14.15** Bending Light **15.10** Eternal You **16.40** Foodland (3 eps) **18.30** Ben Gurion, Epilogue **19.40** Once Upon a Time There Was a King **21.00** Baba Sali: The Last Tzadick **22.20** Ofra (3 eps) **01.30** Foodland (3 eps)

YES DOCU (Y8)

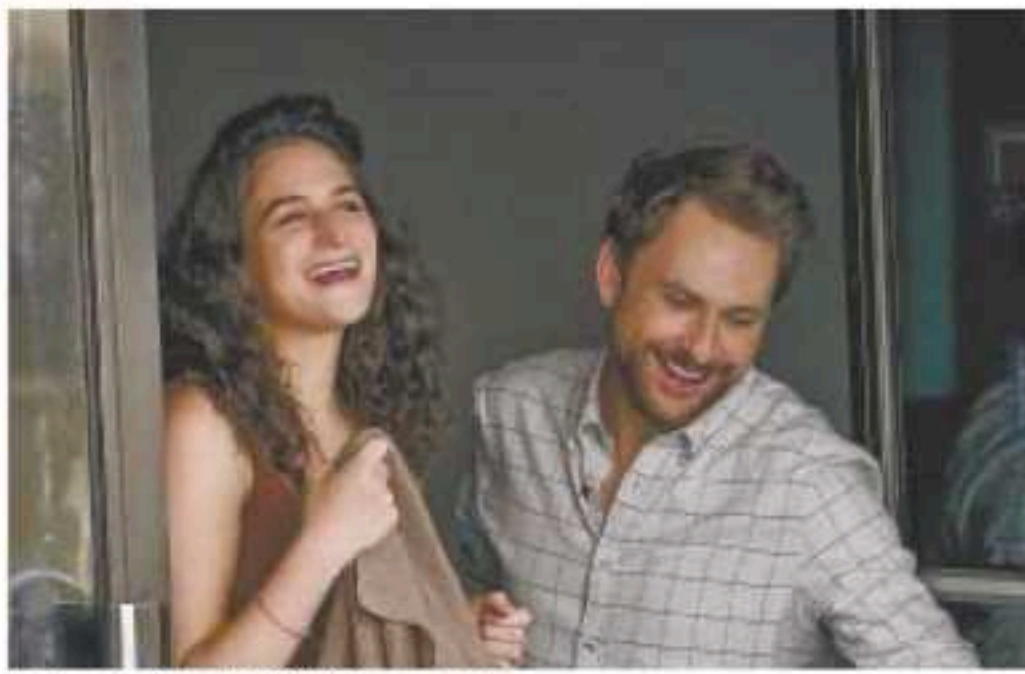
08.20 Business of Birth Control **09.50** Saudi Women's Driving School **10.50** RRG **12.25** Hans Zimmer: Hollywood Rebel **13.20** The Kingmaker **15.00** What the Hell Happened to Blood, Sweat & Tears **16.55** What's Happening To Me Later? **17.55** The Eternal Flame **19.35** Kira's Future **20.35** Savta **21.30** Amir Fryszter Guttman: The Life and Death of a Pop Star **22.30** Days of Pick **00.15** Rockfour: Mechaon Hazman **01.45** Amir Fryszter Guttman: The Life and Death of a Pop Star

HISTORY (Y44/H43)

05.30 Box for Life **06.35** Beyond Skinwalker Ranch (2 eps) **08.00** Lost U-Boats of WWII **08.40** Pawn Stars Do America (s.2) **10.00** American Pickers **10.45** Pawn Stars **11.25** Palmach - Introduction **10.00** Ancient Aliens **11.25** History's Greatest Mysteries (s.4) **13.05** The Prof is Out There (s.4) **13.45** Lost U-Boats of WWII **14.30** American Pickers **15.10** Pawn Stars Do America (s.2) **16.30** American Pickers **17.15** Storage Wars **17.35** American Pickers **18.20** Storage Wars (2 eps) **19.00** Lost U-Boats of WWII **19.45** Ancient Aliens **20.25** The Prof is Out There (s.4) **21.05** Pawn Stars **21.50** History's Greatest Mysteries (s.5) **22.30** Dark Marvels **23.10** Holy Marvels with Dennis Quaid **23.50** Lost U-Boats of WWII **00.30** The Prof is Out There (s.4) **01.10** History's Greatest Mysteries (s.4) **01.55** Dark Marvels **02.35** Holy Marvels with Dennis Quaid

YES TV DRAMA (Y5)

06.00 The Bay (s.3) **06.45** Elsbeth **07.30** So Help Me Todd **08.15** Maxima **09.00** A Class Apart **09.50** The Bold and the Beautiful **10.25** The Young and the Restless **11.05** The Bay (s.3) **11.50** Elsbeth **12.35** So Help Me Todd **13.20** Maxima **14.10** A Class Apart **14.55** So Help Me Todd **15.40** The Bay (s.3) **16.30** Maxima **17.20** A Class Apart **18.05** Miss Fallaci **18.55** The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency (3 eps) **20.50** My Brilliant Friend (s.4) **21.40** The Golden Bachelorette **21.10** The Chef **23.55** Possessions **00.45** My Brilliant Friend (s.4) **01.40** The Golden Bachelorette



"I Want You Back," HOT Cinema 3, 22.00.

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YES TV ACTION (Y6)

06.10 Rookie Blue (s.2, 2 eps) **07.35** La Brea (s.3) **08.20** NCIS (s.20, 2 eps) **09.45** Nightsleeper **10.15** Three Pines **11.25** Rookie Blue (s.2, 2 eps) **12.55** Blood & Treasure (s.2) **13.35** NCIS (s.20, 2 eps) **15.00** La Brea (s.3, 2 eps) **16.30** Rookie Blue (s.2, 2 eps) **18.00** Nightsleeper **18.50** Three Pines **19.45** Blood & Treasure (s.2) **20.30** NCIS (s.20, 2 eps) **22.00** Seal Team (s.7) **22.45** Trigger Point (s.2) **23.35** His Dark Materials **00.35** Boardwalk Empire (s.2, 2 eps) **02.30** Children in the Forest

YES TV COMEDY (Y7)

06.00 Getting On (2 eps) **07.00** Silicon Valley (s.6, 2 eps) **08.00** The Bugzlogos (2 eps) **08.50** Baby Daddy (s.5, 2 eps) **09.40** Getting On (2 eps) **10.40** Silicon Valley (s.6, 2 eps) **11.40** The Bugzlogos (2 eps) **12.40** Baby Daddy (s.5, 2 eps) **13.30** Parks and Recreations (s.2, 2 eps) **14.20** The Nanny (s.3, 2 eps) **15.10** Friends (s.6, 2 eps) **16.00** Silicon Valley (s.6, 2 eps) **17.00** Hot in Cleveland (s.4, 2 eps) **17.50** Parks and Recreations (s.2, 2 eps) **18.40** The Nanny (s.3, 2 eps) **19.30** Friends (s.6, 2 eps) **20.20** Hot in Cleveland (s.4, 2 eps) **21.10** Parks and Recreations (s.2, 2 eps) **22.00** The Nanny (s.3, 2 eps) **22.50** Friends (s.6, 2 eps) **23.40** Silicon Valley (s.6, 2 eps) **00.40** The Bugzlogos (2 eps) **01.30** Hot in Cleveland (s.4, 2 eps) **02.20** Getting On (2 eps)

EUROSPORT (Y61/H59)

06.00 Cycling - Road World Championship **08.00** Snooker - British Open in Cheltenham **09.30** Surfing - World League Championship Tour **10.30** Cycling - Road World Championship **12.30** The Minute **12.35** Snooker - British Open in Cheltenham **14.00** Cycling - Road World Championship **19.00** The Minute **19.05** Climbing - World Cup **20.00** Equestrianism - Contest in Belgium **20.55** The Minute **21.00** Snooker - British Open in Cheltenham **01.00** Equestrianism - Contest in Belgium **02.00** Cycling - Road World Championship

MOVIE CHANNELS

HOT CINEMA 1 (H16)

07.50 City of Lies (UK/USA, 2018). Crime drama. Dir: Brad Furman. With Johnny Depp, Forest Whitaker, Toby Huss. **09.40** Inside Llewellyn Davis (UK/USA/France, 2013). Drama. Dir: Ethan & Joel Coen. With Oscar Isaac, Carey Mulligan, John Goodman. **11.20** The Commuter (France/USA, 2018). Action. Dir: Jaume Collet-Serra. With Liam Neeson, Vera Farmiga, Patrick Wilson. **13.05** Plane (UK/USA, 2023). Action. Dir: Jean-François Richet. With Gerard Butler, Mike Colter, Tony Goldwyn. **14.50** Mary Shelley (UK/Luxembourg/USA, 2017). Biography drama. Dir: Haifaa Al-Mansour. With Elle Fanning, Ben Powell, Owen Richards. **16.50** Misconduct (USA, 2016). Thriller. Dir: Shintaro Shimomura. With Josh Duhamel, Anthony Hopkins, Ai Pacino. **18.35** Transsiberian (Spain/Germany/UK/Lithuania, 2008). Crime. Dir: Brad Anderson. With Woody Harrelson, Emily Mortimer, Ben Kingsley. **20.25** Mile 22 (China/USA, 2018). Action. Dir: Peter Berg. With Mark Wahlberg, Lauren Cohan, Iko Uwais. **22.00** Mechanic: Resurrection (France/USA, 2016). Action. Dir: Dennis Gansel. With Jason Statham, Jessica Alba, Tommy Lee Jones. **23.35** Devotion (USA, 2022). Action. Dir: J. D. Dillard. With Jonathan Majors, Glen Powell. **01.55** Five Nights at Freddy's (USA, 2023). Supernatural Horror. Dir: Emma Tammi. With Josh Hutcherson Poper Rubio, Elizabeth Lail.

HOT CINEMA 2 (H17)

07.40 13 Minutes (USA/Canada, 2021). Action. Dir: Lindsay Gossling. With Anne Heche, Thora Birch, Amy Smart. **09.25** The Next Three Days (USA/France, 2010). Drama. Dir: Paul Haggis. With Russell Crowe, Elizabeth Banks. **11.35** The Black Demon (USA/Dominican Republic/Mexico/Slovenia, 2023). Horror. Dir: Adrian Gurzenberg. With Omar Chaparro, Bolívar Sanchez, Carlos Solerzaga. **13.15** A Day to Die (USA, 2022). Action crime. Dir: Wes Miller. With Kevin Dillon, Bruce Willis, Frank Grillo. **15.00** On the Line (USA, 2022). Thriller. Dir: Romuald Boulanger. With Mel Gibson, William Moseley, Aila Serró-O'Neill. **16.45** Moonfall (USA/China/UK/Canada, 2022). Sci-fi action. Dir: Roland Emmerich. With Halle Berry, Harald Kloser, Spenser Cohen. **18.55** Black Site (USA, 2022). Action. Dir: Sophia Banks. With Jason Clarke, Michelle Monaghan, Jay Courtney. **20.25** Brake (USA, 2012). Crime thriller. Dir: Gabo Torres. With Stephen Dorff, Chyler Leigh, Jai Boume. **22.00** Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (USA/United Arab Emirates/Czech Republic, 2011). Action. Dir: Brad Bird. With Tom Cruise, Jeremy Renner, Simon Pegg. **00.10** The Gentlemen (UK/USA, 2019). Action comedy. Dir: Guy Ritchie. With Matthew McConaughey, Charlie Hunnam, Michelle Dockery. **02.00** Solace (USA, 2015). Crime mystery. Dir: Monso Poyart. With Anthony Hopkins, Jeffrey Dean Morgan, Abbie Cornish.

HOT CINEMA 3 (H18)

06.45 Mr. Bears Holiday (UK/France/Germany, 2007). Comedy. Dir: Steve Bendelack. With Rowan Atkinson, Steve Pemberton. **08.15** Ocean's Eight (USA, 2018). Action. Dir: Gary Ross. With Sandra Bullock, Cate Blanchett, Anne Hathaway. **10.05** Just Like Heaven (USA, 2005). Comedy. Dir: Mark Waters. With Reese Witherspoon, Mark Ruffalo. **11.40** Meet the Parents (USA, 2000). Comedy. Dir: Jay Roach. With Robert De Niro, Ben Stiller, Teri Polo. **13.30** Sam & Kate (USA, 2022). Romantic comedy. Dir: Darren Le Gallo. With Jake Hoffman, Schuyler Fisk, Dustin Hoffman, Sissy Spacek. **15.20** Miss Congeniality 2: Armed & Fabulous (USA, 2005). Comedy. Dir: John Pasquin. With Sandra Bullock, Regina King. **17.15** Sluber (USA, 2019). Action comedy. Dir: Michael Dowse. With Dave Bautista, Kumal Nanjani, Mira Sorvino. **18.50** So Undercover (USA, 2012). Comedy. Dir: Tom Vaughan. With Miley Cyrus, Jeremy Piven, Mike O'Malley. **20.25** Strays (USA, 2023). Adventure comedy. Dir: Josh Greenbaum. With the voices of Will Ferrell, Jamie Foxx, Isla Fisher. **21.10** I Want You Back (USA, 2022). Romantic comedy. Dir: Jason Orley. With Charlie Day, Jenny Slate, Scott Eastwood. **23.55** I Got Lifer Auroré (France, 2017). Drama. Dir: Blandine Lenoir. With Agnes Jaoui, Thibaut de Montalbert, Pascale Arbillot. **01.25** Roberts (USA, 2023). Romantic comedy. Dir: Casper Cristenosen, Anthony Hines. With Shailene Woodley, Jack Whitehall, Paul Rudd.

HOT CINEMA 4 (H19)

07.35 My House in Umbria (UK/Italy, 2003). Drama. Dir: Richard Loncraine. With Maggie Smith, Ronnie Barker. **09.20** Coup de Chance (USA/France/UK, 2023). Comedy. Dir: Woody Allen. With Lou de Laage, Niels Schneider, Anna Laak. **10.55** What They Had (USA, 2018). Drama. Dir: Elizabeth Chomko. With Hilary Swank, Michael Shannon, Robert Forster. **12.35** Summerland (UK, 2020). Romantic war drama. Dir: Jessica Swale. With Gemma Arterton, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Penelope Wilton. **14.15** Past Lives (USA/South Korea, 2023). Romantic drama. Dir: Celine Song. With Greta Lee, Teo Yoo, John Magaro. **16.00** Changeling (USA, 2008). Drama. Dir: Clint Eastwood. With Angelina Jolie, Goffin Griffith. **18.25** Wild Rose (UK/USA/Canada, 2018). Musical drama. Dir: Tom Harper. With Jessie Buckley, Matt Costello, Jane Patterson. **20.05** Gone Baby Gone (USA, 2007). Crime. Dir: Ben Affleck. With Morgan Freeman, Ed Harris, Casey Affleck. **22.00** May December (USA, 2023). Drama. Dir: Todd Haynes. With Natalie Portman, Chris Tenzis, Charles Melton. **23.55** One True Loves (USA, 2023). Romantic comedy. Dir: Andy Fickman. With Phillipa Soo, Simu Liu, Luke Bracey. **01.35** Widows (UK/USA, 2018). Drama. Dir: Steve McQueen. With Viola Davis, Michelle Rodriguez, Elizabeth Debicki.

YES MOVIES DRAMA (Y1)

07.40 A Family Man (Canada/USA, 2016). Drama. Dir: Mark Williams. With Alison Brie, Gerard Butler, Willem Dafoe. **09.30** Breaking Through (USA, 2015). Musical drama. Dir: John Swetnam. With Anitta, Sophia Aiguler, Larry Bourgeois. **11.15** The Old Man & the Gun (USA, 2018). Biography. Dir: David Lowery. With Robert Redford, Casey Affleck, Sissy Spacek. **12.50** A Dog's Way Home (USA/China, 2019). Family adventure. Dir: Charles Martin Smith. With Ashley Judd, Jonah Hauer-King, Edward James Olmos. **14.25** The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 (USA, 2011). Fantasy drama. Dir: Bill Condon. With Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson. **16.25** Nights in Rodanthe (USA/Australia, 2008). Drama. Dir: George C. Wolfe. With Diane Lane, Richard Gere. **18.00** A Cinderella Story: Starstruck (USA, 2021). Family comedy. Dir: Michelle Johnston. With Bailee Madison, Michael Evans Behling, April Telek. **19.45** Now Is Good (UK/France/USA, 2012). Romantic drama. Dir: Ofi Parker. With Dakota Fanning, Jeremy Irvine. **21.30** Midnight Sun (USA, 2018). Romantic drama. Dir: Scott Speer. With Bella Thorne, Patrick Schwarzenegger, Rob Riggle. **23.00** Life as We Know It (USA, 2010). Romantic comedy. Dir: Greg Berlanti. With Katherine Heigl, Josh Duhamel. **00.55** Beautiful Wedding (USA, 2024). Romantic comedy. Dir: Roger Kumble. With Virginia Gardner, Dylan Sproule, Libe Barber. **02.30** Virginity (Israel, 2022). Drama. Dir: Maor Zaguri. With Maor Levy, Chen Amralec Zaguri, Or Ad.

HOT 3 (H3)

08.15 Big Mood (2 eps) **09.05** Hotel Portofino (s.3) **10.00** New Amsterdam **10.45** Big Mood (2 eps) **11.40** A Place to Call Home **12.25** New Amsterdam **13.10** Hotel Portofino (s.3) **14.05** Connected (s.11, 9 eps) **18.10** A Place to Call Home **18.50** Big Mood (2 eps) **19.45** New Amsterdam **20.30** Fellowship 1s in Trouble **21.15** A Place to Call Home **22.00** Indal **22.45** Fellow Travelers **23.45** Fellowship 1s in Trouble **00.35** Hotel Portofino (s.3) **01.30** Indal **02.15** Fellow Travelers

HOT HBO (H4)

10.35 Hacks (s.3) **11.10** Succession **12.10** Wisting (s.2) **13.00** The Long Shadow **13.50** Silicon Valley (s.5) **14.20** Hacks (s.3) **14.55** Succession **15.00** Wisting (s.2) **16.50** The Long Shadow **17.40** Silicon Valley (s.5) **18.10** Succession **19.20** Wisting (s.2) **20.05** Paris Has Fallen **22.55** My Brilliant Friend (s.4) **23.45** A Gentleman in Moscow **00.30** Boardwalk Empire (s.4) **01.30** Sex and the City (s.3) **02.05** Paris Has Fallen **02.55** Boardwalk Empire (s.4)

YES MOVIES ACTION (Y2)

06.15 Hart's War (USA, 2002). Drama. Dir: Gregory Hoblit. With Bruce Willis, Colin Farrell. **08.15** Insurgent (USA, 2015). Sci-Fi. Dir: Robert Schwentke. With Kate Winslet, Shailene Woodley. **10.15** The Covenant (UK/Spain/USA, 2023). Action. Dir: Guy Ritchie. With Jake Gyllenhaal, Dar Salim, Sean Sagar. **12.20** Devotion (USA, 2022). Action. Dir: J. D. Dillard. With Jonathan Majors, Glen Powell. **14.40** Snowden (France/Germany/USA, 2016). Biographical thriller. Dir: Oliver Stone. With Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Shailene Woodley, Melissa Leo. **17.00** 6 Below: Miracle on the Mountain (USA, 2017). Biography drama. Dir: Scott Waugh. With Josh Hartnett, Mira Sorvino, Sarah Dumont. **18.35** The Black Dahlia (Germany/USA, 2006). Mystery. Dir: Brian De Palma. With Josh Hartnett, Scarlett Johansson. **20.40** Marlowe (Ireland/Spain/France/USA, 2022). Crime. Dir: Neil Jordan. With Liam Neeson, Diane Kruger, John Banville. **22.30** The Informer (UK/USA/Canada, 2019). Crime. Dir: Andrea Di Stefano. With Joel Kinnaman, Rosamund Pike, Common. **00.20** Freelancers (USA, 2012). Crime action. Dir: Jessy Terrero. With 50 Cent, Robert De Niro, Forest Whitaker. **02.00** Untraceable (USA, 2008). Crime. Dir: Gregory Hoblit. With Diane Lane, Colin Hanks.

HOT CINEMA 5 (H8)

06.00 Foodland (3 eps) **07.50** Shlomo Artzi (3 eps) **11.05** The Unit: Matkal (4 eps) **15.00** Indie City - Southern Border - Danielle Weisse **15.05** Indie City - Southern Border - Tipex **15.15** Ofra (3 eps) **18.25** Seffi **19.25** Shisel **20.35** Why Didn't You Tell Me: Ark Lavi **21.45** Indie City - Southern Border - Danielle Weisse **21.50** Indie City - Southern Border - Tipex **22.00** Queen Shoshana (2 pts) **00.05** Erot: 20-40 **00.45** Erot: 40-60 **01.20** Erot: 20-40 **02.00** Erot: Couples **02.35** Shlomo Artzi (3 eps)

HOT CHANNEL 8 (H8)

06.00 Foodland (3 eps) **07.50** Shlomo Artzi (3 eps) **11.05** The Unit: Matkal (4 eps) **15.00** Indie City - Southern Border - Danielle Weisse **15.05** Indie City - Southern Border - Tipex **15.15** Ofra (3 eps) **18.25** Seffi **19.25** Shisel **20.35** Why Didn't You Tell Me: Ark Lavi **21.45** Indie City - Southern Border - Danielle Weisse **21.50** Indie City - Southern Border - Tipex **22.00** Queen Shoshana (2 pts) **00.05** Erot: 20-40 **00.45** Erot: 40-60 **01.20** Erot: 20-40 **02.00** Erot: Couples **02.35** Shlomo Artzi (3 eps)

YES MOVIES COMEDY (Y3)

07.00 Walk of Shame (USA, 2014). Comedy. Dir: Steven Brill. With Elizabeth Banks, James Marsden. **08.35** Relative Strangers (USA, 2006). Comedy. Dir: Greg Ginnena. With Danny DeVito, Kathy Bates, Neve Campbell. **10.10** Ideal Home (USA, 2018). Comedy. Dir: Andrew Fleming. With Steve Coogan, Paul Rudd, Jesse Luken. **11.40** Family Camp (USA, 2022). Comedy. Dir: Brian Cates. With Tommy Woodard, Eddie James, Leigh-Allyn Baker. **13.35** Tag (USA, 2018). Comedy. Dir: Jeff Tomsic. With Ed Helms, Li Rel Howey, Jon Hamm. **15.15** Get Smart (USA, 2008). Action. Dir: Peter Segal. With Steve Carell, Anne Hathaway. **17.05** The Longest Yard (USA, 2005). Comedy. Dir: Peter Segal. With Adam Sandler, Chris Rock. **19.00** Life of Crime (USA, 2013). Crime comedy. Dir: Daniel Schechter. With Jennifer Aniston, Yasin Bey, Isla Fisher. **20.40** The Other Guys (USA, 2010). Comedy. Dir: Adam McKay. With Will Ferrell, Mark Wahlberg, Samuel L. Jackson, Eva Mendes. **22.30** Baywatch (UK/China/USA, 2017). Action. Dir: Seth Gordon. With Zac Efron, Alexandra Daddario, Dwayne Johnson. **00.25** The Hangover Part III (USA, 2013). Comedy. Dir: Todd Phillips. With Bradley Cooper, Zach Galifianakis, Ed Helms. **02.05** The Honeymoon (UK/Italy, 2022). Comedy. Dir: Dean Craig. With Pico Alexander, Asim Chaudhry, Flynn Allen.



CHANNEL KAN 11 (Y11/H11)

06.00 The Piano Festival **07.10** Hatsh HaGadol - Moshe Lahav performs in the Gray Club in Tel Aviv **09.15** Through the Music - Yoav Kutner interview Aliva Uzeri **09.45** Marking the 50th Anniversary of the Talvia HaAdud band **10.55** Zehu-Zeh - Satire **11.25** A Present for the Holiday - with musician Sharanan Streett **11.55** Cooking with comedian Tom Yarar **12.55** Come Dine With Me: North - A group of strangers compete for the title of ultimate dinner party host (5 eps) **14.00** News Flash **14.05** Come Dine With Me (cont.) **15.35** Carpool Karaoke - Udi Kagan takes Yasmin Muelem on a wild car ride **16.00** The Chase - Game Show (s.8) **17.00** Special news broadcast **17.30** Three Songs - The stories behind three Israeli songs **18.25** Kupa Rasht - Israeli comedy series (s.4, 2 eps) **19.15** Sofa Stories - Celebrates share experiences from their personal lives **19.50** The Evening News **21.00** Whatever You Say - Satire (s.4) **21.35** The Jews Are Coming - Satire **22.00** Duvu Tassa - Live at the Barby Club **23.50** News Flash **23.40** Yossi Banai and the Revolution Orchestra **00.40** The Piano Festival - Hanan Yovel **01.40** Behind the Notes - Kobi Oz hosts Alon Oelreich

KESHET (Y12/H12)

06.35 The Race for Vacation - with Nadav Bornstein **07.05** Celebrating the Holiday **08.10** Cooking with Heroes **09.05** Galit & Itanit **10.50** Sabri Maranan stand-up with Rot

'La Boheme' performed in reverse order and other tales

Yuval Sharon's book, 'A New Philosophy of Opera,' is aptly named. 'Without innovation, the genre might go extinct'

Amir Mandel
 Though I believe in the importance of escapism in times like these, I doubted whether talking to Yuval Sharon about his new book "A New Philosophy of Opera" was relevant to our lives. But then I remembered that culture is one of the reasons we struggle for the society we live in. So, yes, let's talk about opera. Sharon was born in 1979 in Chicago to parents who had emigrated from Israel. He trained in theater and opera, developed as a di-

rector and will soon direct Wagner's "Der Ring des Nibelungen" at the New York Metropolitan Opera, the first time he has ever directed the "Ring." He partly made his name on an outstanding production of Puccini's "La Boheme" - done backward. The heroine is deathly ill at the beginning of the opera but her condition improves as the show progresses. By the end, the main characters are alive, not dead. "This was my first big project as a director on Detroit's main stage," Sharon says by Zoom from New York

-in English; he doesn't speak Hebrew. "The only people who had a problem with it were traditional opera patrons who show up at the hall with specific expectations." But opera is a living, dynamic thing that should be deconstructed and reconstructed, he says. The way the story is told is one of the main themes of his book. "I mainly write about what's happening with the opera in the United States," Sharon says, adding that when it comes to the relationship between the story and the music, there are two options.

"Some people in the audience, and some opera houses, believe that operas have silly stories with wonderful music riding this silly story, and the music makes showing up worth it," he says. But in the United States there is also an approach that treats the story as exciting, even if only on a superficial level. "The power of the story in opera is the intersection of several axes: good drama, excellent music and quality presentation," Sharon says. "Without a good story, the opera isn't good, and it could be good not just in the plot but sometimes as a par-



Yuval Sharon

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

able, on a symbolic level, the psychological layers of the characters and the dynamic between them. "This is very evident in Mozart's great operas, mu-

sic that's great in itself and also represents and serves the deeper layers of the story. And also, there's the presentation: the direction, design and above all the

singers who are capable of singing it all with relevance and emotional power." Sharon fears that the way opera is being performed nowadays could decrease its emotional relevance, driving away most fans and locking the genre up as an elitist, dated art that will go extinct.

"You need to look at opera's past in order to address its future. The basic essence of this medium is to brainstorm in a mess of disciplines where each creator contributes to increase the emotional experience. By its very essence, the genre is a bit primal and chaotic."

He notes the word "opera" itself, which derives from an Italian word for "work." "This avoids defining which type of art we're in. Opera is associated with classical music because they share an audience, but viewing and appreciating an opera requires a broader approach than listening to classical music. It also notes the stage element - the visual, theatrical part. Many things beyond the music." An opera house could also be a cultural vise. It has rules of behavior: when to applaud and, more important, when not to applaud. The audience is supposed to be well informed about these rules and the events going on onstage.

In the book, Sharon recalls the first opera he ever saw, Verdi's "La Traviata." He was 12. Opera didn't yet have subtitles; he remembers not understanding anything, and he sure didn't enjoy himself. In this vein, he recalls a scene he hates in the movie "Pretty Woman." Richard Gere's character takes Julia Roberts' character to "La Traviata" and she is moved to tears.

In his book, Sharon writes that the movie had the chance to claim that opera also speaks to an audience without any expertise, that the emotional intensity could touch anyone. Instead, opera is portrayed as part

of the process of Roberts' cultivation, refinement and socialization, alongside the jewelry and expensive clothes that Gere buys her. This perpetuates the identification of opera with a certain social class.

Sharon believes that for opera to survive as an art, it must be accessible to a wider audience. To speak to a large audience, opera must be a transformative experience, like the one described by people returning from a great rock or pop concert. How to do this is a far from a trivial question, but Sharon sometimes thinks it takes less than we might imagine.

'The basic essence of this medium is to brainstorm in a mess of disciplines where each creator contributes to increase the emotional experience,' Sharon says.

"I always get excited before a concert of Mahler's 'Symphony No. 6,' simply because he didn't categorically determine the order of the second and third movements, so each concert could be different. In fact, by looking at opera's past, we learn that this is a medium of constant rejuvenation.

"What doesn't serve it well is to come to a ceremony with most of the parts predetermined, to take part in some set ritual. There better be an element of innovation, of surprise, of change. You don't have to be afraid if the director or anybody takes great liberties and introduces big changes to the piece.

"This doesn't ruin it... If it's performed once radically and nontraditionally, you can always go back to the traditional version."

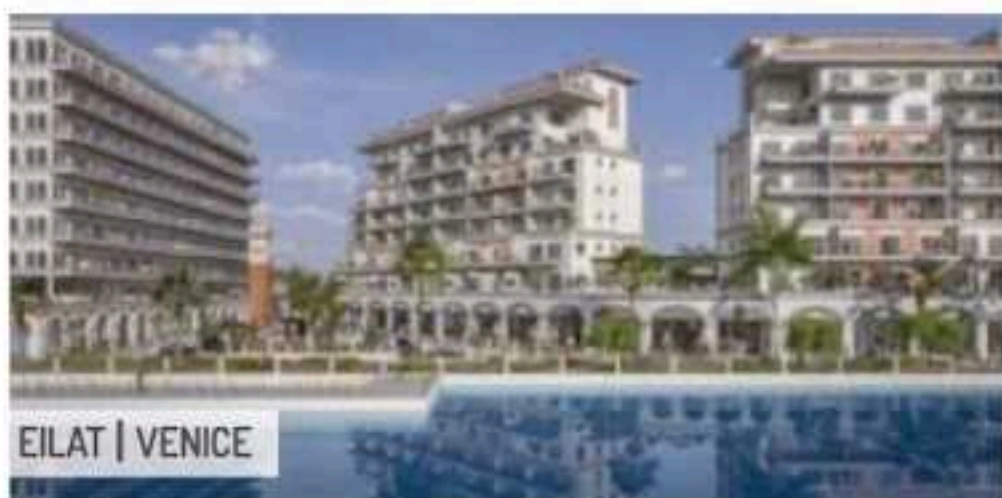
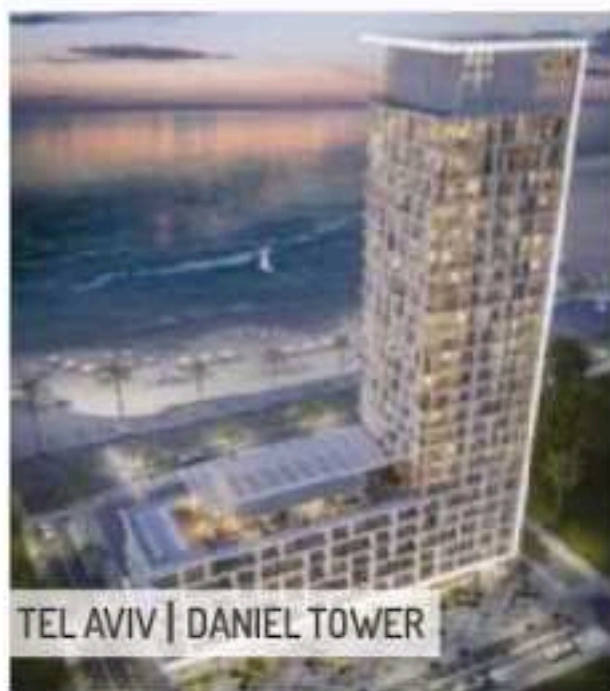
Yossi Avrahami



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It's good that there are things that don't change, and won't change in the upcoming year. Come to get an impression of our high standard in a variety of projects throughout the country. **Happy New Year!**



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Weather

Comfortable
 There is a chance of morning rain Wednesday. The holiday eve will be pleasant and cool. Thursday will be warmer and drier, and Friday will be warmer still. Saturday will be hot.

Thursday: Sunny, 20-28
 Friday: Sunny, 18-23
 Saturday: Sunny, 17-28

Air pollution index: 1.10.24
 low medium high very high
 Jerusalem: 15-23, Tel Aviv: 19-28, Haifa: 17-28, Krayot: 17-25, Be'er Sheva: 15-28, Karniel: 17-28, Afula: 17-28, Mod'in: 17-28

Holiday and Shabbat Times

Jerusalem	17:42	17:40
Tel Aviv	18:04	18:01
Haifa	17:53	17:50
Be'er Sheva	18:04	18:02

The Mediterranean Sea: 20-40 KPH

Safed: 15-23
Katzrin: 15-28
Haifa: 19-28
Talbeh: 17-28
Tel Aviv: 20-28
Ariel: 17-25
Amman: 16-25
Ashkelon: 20-28
Jerusalem: 14-24
Dead Sea: 26-34
Be'er Sheva: 15-28
Mitzpe Ramon: 15-24
Cairo: 21-30
Eilat: 24-34
Eilat Bay: 24-50 KPH



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