

Israel  
Action  
Committee

בס"ד

ה' סיון 5786  
May 21, 2026

## Sivan's Tzedakah Highlight



[Click Here to Make a Donation](#)

***“These are the soldiers who give Israel ‘Peace of Mind’ So friends, it is our duty to help them find their Peace of Mind”, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Zt"l.***

***IDF soldiers were rushed into battle in the aftermath of the most heinous attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust. The destruction, the sights of families murdered in their homes, will stay with them forever.***

***Based on past experience we estimate that 80% will suffer to some degree from post-traumatic stress. Metiv stands beside IDF veterans at the moment when the battle has ended, but the war inside has not. Day after day, veterans arrive carrying memories that do not fade with time—images, sounds, and losses that follow them home and into their families. Metiv provides a safe, professional space where those experiences can finally be named, felt, and understood, guided by expert therapists who specialize in trauma rooted in combat and moral injury.***

***Through evidence-based treatment, innovative research, and programs such as Peace of Mind, Metiv helps veterans move from survival to healing. Here, they are not asked to be strong or silent; they are invited to be human. By restoring emotional balance, rebuilding trust, and strengthening resilience, Metiv helps veterans reclaim their lives***



## Our Foundations of Family ~ Faith ~ Heritage

Saragail Chessin Carpe

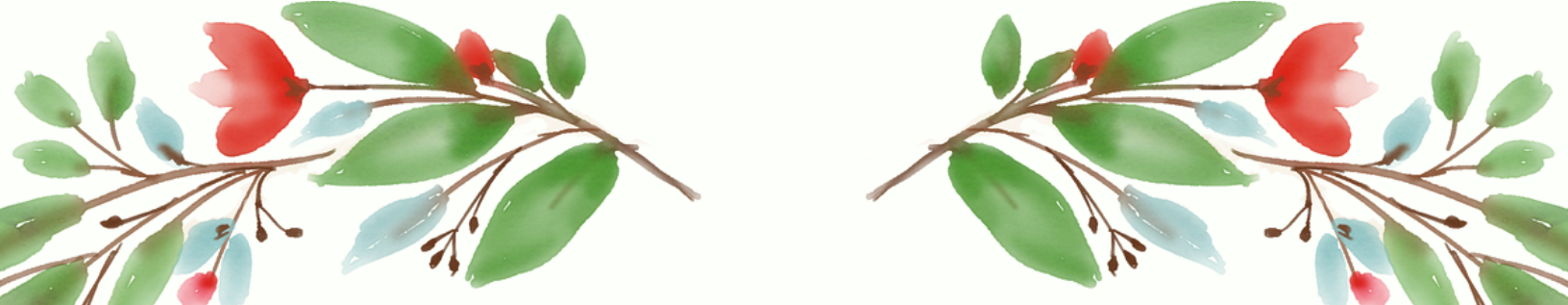
If I asked you to close your eyes and recollect the very earliest of your impressions and memories - what would you see? How old were you? Who were you with?

The cherished moments I hold dear, being held in my father's arms in shul - his strength, the beauty and musicality of all the voices in tefillah, the silken feeling of his tallis, the security... A 'portrait' in time all those years ago. My mother, so bright, vibrant, never ending 'work of the home' - nurturing, cooking for the eight of us. Her words to me coming through the door after school each day at Yavneh, "tell me what you learned today?" A mini class... At times she might be singing when I came home, her magnificent voice a tender welcome.

My parents z"l were much older than those of my classmates and friends. They were born in the early 1900's and had lived through profoundly difficult times. Their love, respect and devotion to each other always anchored in the bedrock of faith, belief and absolute connection to Hashem. Memories of Ma lighting the Shabbos candles, the glow on her lovely face... My father 'making kiddush' and the ha-motzi; and then he would kiss my mother's forehead. Those kisses saying more than any words could express.

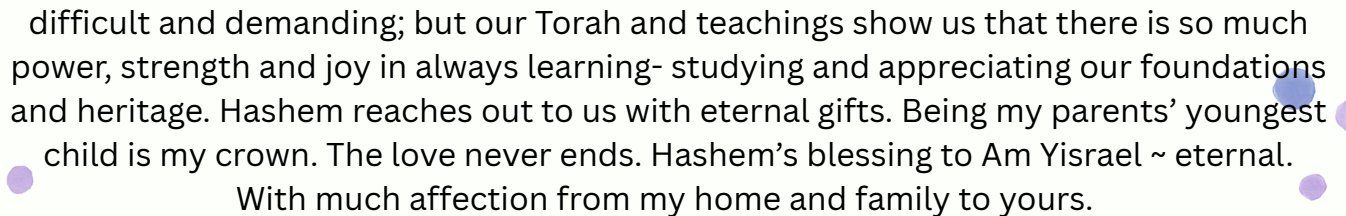
Hashem blessing my siblings and I through those gentle moments of reflected love, appreciation and gratitude in the Shabbos candles' radiance. Divine love through our parents' caring. We were taught to "remember who you are." The absolute understanding what all the blessings of our faith give... the strength, the security, the honor, the responsibility. The pride in not only knowing that we were part of our family - but that 'family' extended to a people - Am Yisrael, and a nation and land - Eretz Yisrael. My parents always told us that no matter where we traveled, wherever we might find ourselves, or where life might take us, the Jewish community would be there, and welcome us. Security, stability and support because we are mishpacha. These connections are a foundation of who we are as a people... as a faith.

We are now approaching Chag Shavuot. Celebrating the Divine gift of receiving the Torah at Har Sinai. Almost a year ago I was in Eretz Yisrael to celebrate the bat mitzvah of my oldest granddaughter, Ahava. My son and daughter-in-law had honored me with being one of the speakers at the beautiful occasion.



Part of my words mirrored the belief that Hashem shared his gift of the Torah with all of us at Sinai - every soul, every generation... all united, all connected, all blessed - together. The comfort of that understanding resonates. I told my blossoming granddaughter that the love shared from Hashem to Am Yisrael then... given to my parents - to me - to her parents - to her... All connected, one people, protected and cherished.

Within a few days bombs were flying.  
Everything shut down.  
Round the clock alerts and sirens...  
running to our secure rooms.  
Through it all Eretz Yisrael  
protecting her children.  
Hashem's over- arching military miracles.  
The resilience and fortitude of the Israeli people breathtaking.  
The pride in our Israeli soldiers and mishpacha so deserved.



We all experience the realities of different stages in life. At times gentle, at times difficult and demanding; but our Torah and teachings show us that there is so much power, strength and joy in always learning- studying and appreciating our foundations and heritage. Hashem reaches out to us with eternal gifts. Being my parents' youngest child is my crown. The love never ends. Hashem's blessing to Am Yisrael ~ eternal.  
With much affection from my home and family to yours.





## ***Blooming Beneath the Eyes of Hashem***

***By Deborah Kempin***

***When I think about Israel, I envision a flowering plant bursting with color, its emerald leaves pulsing with life as it stretches upward toward the heavens, toward the spirit of Hashem tending His garden. Its roots press deeply into desert sand where life miraculously blossoms as though nourished by the richest soil on earth. Against every natural expectation, beauty rises from barrenness.***

***Israel is a land of ancient ruins, fertile Mediterranean coastlines, rugged mountains and valleys, the deep Jordan Rift Valley, and the sweeping Negev Desert. Within that land lives a vibrant and courageous people. And within those people lies an extraordinary story of resilience, brilliance, and divine purpose.***

***This tiny nation has given the world innovations that transformed modern life. Israelis helped develop Intel microprocessors and the USB flash drive. They pioneered navigation systems and autonomous driving technology. They invented the PillCam, revolutionized medicine through ExAblate focused ultrasound treatments, and created the Emergency Bandage now used in trauma kits across the globe. Israeli ingenuity transformed agriculture through drip irrigation, high-yield seed technologies, and advanced water recycling systems that lead the world in wastewater purification for farming. Israeli humanitarian teams rush into disaster zones worldwide, offering aid wherever tragedy strikes.***

***Beyond technology and medicine, this small nation has produced Nobel Prize laureates in Chemistry, Economics, and Literature, contributing immeasurably to humanity.***

***Looking at such accomplishments, one might assume this tiny nation possesses some hidden formula – a secret source of intelligence, creativity, courage, and endurance. Israel's military history alone often feels miraculous. Through ingenuity, audacity, and innovation, the Israel Defense Forces have repeatedly defied impossible odds while developing defensive systems that save countless lives.***

***For nearly seventy-eight years, it has seemed as though this nation lives beneath extraordinary Divine protection.***

***Yet at the very same time, Jewish communities scattered throughout the Western world often appear vulnerable and exposed. We witness Jews harassed in the streets, assaulted by mobs, scapegoated online, and vilified in public discourse. Ancient hatred has returned wearing modern clothing.***

***It is as if Jews in exile are flowers trying to bloom in foreign soil – able to survive, even contribute magnificently, yet never able to fully flourish because the environment was never truly meant to nourish the Jewish soul.***

***And so the question arises: how can the Jewish people thrive so remarkably in one corner of the world, yet struggle under hostility almost everywhere else?***

***Why do Jews in the diaspora not respond to hatred with equal aggression? Why are Jewish communities so often marked by restraint rather than vengeance?***

***The answer is simple: because it is not who we are.***

***It is not in our spiritual DNA.***

***We are the people of the Book. The people of the Tent. A nation shaped not by conquest, intimidation, or domination, but by scholarship, justice, compassion, resilience, faith, and family. Yes, there are always outliers, but Jewish identity has never been built upon violence for the sake of power. Our strength has always come from building rather than destroying, healing rather than conquering, enduring rather than erasing.***

***Tonight begins Shavuot – the celebration of receiving the Torah at Har Sinai. More than a historical commemoration, Shavuot represents the annual renewal of our covenant with Hashem and our recommitment to Torah. It connects the freedom of Pesach with the purpose of that freedom: to live as a holy nation guided by Divine principles.***

***For nearly four thousand years, Judaism has survived empires, expulsions, massacres, inquisitions, pogroms, and genocide. Few civilizations in human history have preserved such continuity of belief, practice, and identity across millennia. Whether religious or secular, Torah values remain deeply embedded within the Jewish soul. That spiritual inheritance is our life force.***

***We are raised to honor human dignity, care for the vulnerable, and bring healing into the world. Even in exile, the Torah instructed Jews to remain loyal citizens of their host countries while preserving their spiritual identity. In Jeremiah 29:4-7 the Navi states:***

***כֹּה אָמַר ה' צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכֹל־הַגּוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר־הִגַּלְתִּי מִירוּשָׁלַם בְּבָבֶלָה:***

Thus said the G-d of Hosts, the G-d of Israel, to the whole community that I exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon:

**בְּנוּ בָתִּים וּשְׁבוּ וְנִטְעוּ גִּזְוֹת וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־פְּרִיָן:**

Build houses and live in them, plant gardens and eat their fruit.

**קָחוּ נָשִׁים וְהוֹלִידוּ בָנִים וּבָנוֹת וְקָחוּ לְבָנֵיכֶם נָשִׁים וְאֶת־בָּנוֹתֵיכֶם תִּנּוּ לְאִנָּשִׁים**

You should take wives and beget sons and daughters; and you should take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters. Multiply there, do not decrease.

**וּדְרָשׁוּ אֶת־שְׁלוֹם הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר הִגְלִיתִי אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה וְהִתְפַּלְלוּ בְעַדָּהּ אֱלֹהֵי כִּי בְשְׁלוֹמָהּ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם שְׁלוֹם:**

And seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you and pray to G-D in its behalf; for in its prosperity you shall prosper.

***For centuries, Jews mastered the art of survival in galut. In truth, we have spent far more time in exile than in our own sovereign homeland.***

***And perhaps that is precisely why Jewish communities respond differently to hatred than many other groups do. Judaism has never centered itself on conquering foreign lands or forcibly converting others. The spiritual focus of Jewish life has always remained tied to Eretz Yisrael – our homeland, our covenantal center, the place toward which Jewish hearts have turned for thousands of years.***

***Because instinctively, Jews understand something profound: while we may survive elsewhere, we thrive best in the land promised to us by Hashem.***

***Only there do the roots fully connect to the soil. Only there does the nation breathe in rhythm with its history, its language, its Torah, and its destiny.***

***In Eretz Yisrael, Jewish life is not merely preserved – it blossoms. Under the Shechinah of Hashem, working the land according to Torah and building a society shaped by Jewish values, the Jewish soul grows deep and strong like a vine firmly rooted in nourishing earth.***

***America has blessed Jews with unprecedented freedom, prosperity, and opportunity, and we remain profoundly grateful for those gifts. Yet history has repeatedly taught us how quickly acceptance can shift into suspicion, hostility, and persecution. No matter how comfortable exile may become, exile remains exile.***

***The Torah gives Jews the strength to endure and contribute wherever we live, but the soil of the diaspora can never nourish the Jewish soul the way the soil of Eretz Yisrael can. It is not truly ours.***

***That understanding shapes how Jews respond to antisemitism today. Jewish communities generally rely upon law enforcement, advocacy, intelligence, and communal protection rather than mob violence or vigilantism. Our strategy prioritizes continuity, morality, and survival over rage and revenge.***

***The rebirth of Israel was therefore not merely a political event. It was the reunification of a people with the land woven into their prayers, memory, and covenant with Hashem. Had it not been destined, it could never have happened. Jewish history itself defies logic.***

***Israel is more than a country.***

***It is the physical manifestation of Jewish memory, covenant, and destiny.***

***It is the place where Jewish history, Jewish identity, and Jewish future converge.***

***And perhaps the growing hostility we witness throughout the world is reminding us of something our souls have always known: while Jews can survive anywhere, we only truly come alive in our homeland.***

***For centuries we prayed, "Next year in Jerusalem." We whispered those words through tears, persecution, exile, and hope. That longing was never erased because it lives within our blood, our prayers, and our collective soul.***

***Israel is not only our refuge.***

***Israel is our strength.***

***Israel is our inheritance.***

***Israel is our destiny.***

***It is the land where the Jewish people, planted in their native soil beneath the watchful eyes of Hashem, are finally able to flourish and bloom.***

***Chag Sameach and Shabbat Shalom!***





## The Murder That Shook a Whole Nation

Isaac Tzahi Cohen



The past two and a half years were not easy for the people in the State of Israel. More than 2,000 deaths, around 100,000 injuries – and yet – a civilian murder in the Town of Petach Tikvah during the evening of Yom Ha'atzmaut is all the nation is talking about.


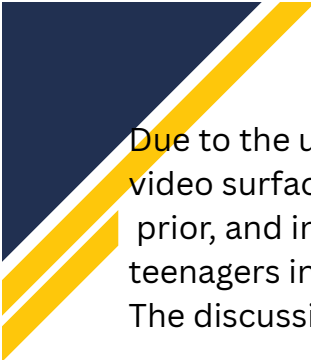
Let's put out the facts first – Petach Tikvah's Kfar Ganim neighborhood is a High-middle class outer suburb of Tel-Aviv, which has a relatively large religious population. The local mall is a hangout place for teenagers. On Erev Yom Ha'atzmaut, a group of teenagers in the ages of 12 to 14, went to Pizza Hut and started spraying patrons with snow spray. The store manager, Yemanu Binyamin Zelka Z"l, stepped in and ordered the teenagers to leave the store right away. In response they asked him what time he finishes his shift and he answered 1:00 am, not thinking too much about it.

Come 1:00 am – the group, together with an additional number of teenagers, waited for Zelka outside the store, and an altercation started; which turned into a 10-against-1 street fight. A few seconds later, Zelka was stabbed in the groin area; the wound struck a major artery, and he later died from his injuries.

Interestingly, the story was covered up by the police for a few days. Since this neighborhood includes some influential media reporters, the story started to come out, and eventually made it into the headlines. Once in the headlines, it turned out that two of these teenagers are children of a well-known underworld figure in Petach Tikvah, while one teenager is the child of a high ranking official within the Israeli defense establishment.

The sickening story now takes a twist - no one in Israel could stay silent. Thousands of people came and supported the Zelka family during the Shiva, and Pizza Hut announced that the Zelka family will keep on receiving Binyamin's salary in perpetuity. The company also established a dedicated support fund for them.





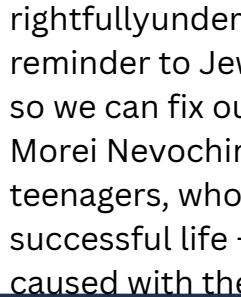
Due to the unprecedented public demand for justice, a surveillance video surfaced of the actual murder and the events that took place prior, and in addition the police started working to arrest all the teenagers involved.

The discussion in Israel separates into different aspects:

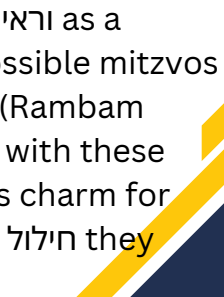
1. The state education system missed 110 of in-person schooling days since 2020 (Covid). Now this is the official figure. Add the number of teachers absent due to personal circumstances, reserve-duty of the teacher (or their spouse) and the fact that many parents are in-and-out of reserve duty – and we end up with a partially empty well – והבור ריק אין – and instead of water, we now have TikTok taking over the well.

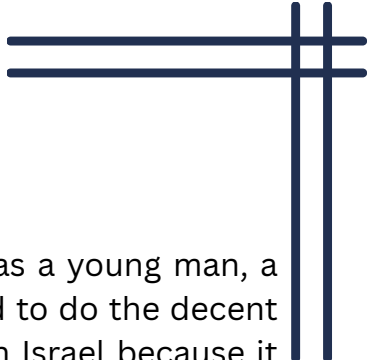

2. The first claim relates mostly to law-abiding citizens. However, reports have emerged about that specific group of teenagers and one person who previously encountered them described them as ‘Nohbut’ (i.e. Hamas Oct 7th terrorists) disguised as Jewish kids. Therefore, the question is why the police could not take care of the group before they committed such a horrible murder? Is it just police incompetence, or that these teenager’s parents are so well-connected, so the police didn’t want to deal with them?

3. The next point is the judicial system – the charges so far are a second-degree murder for one teenager only, while the other teenagers were charged causing serious bodily harm with intent. Assuming the main murder suspect is 15 years old, and unless he receives a life sentence (very unlikely), he would be already eligible for parole in 10 years’ time from now – might be hitting the streets when he’s 25.



4. Finally, we have the religious discussion. Once the surveillance video emerged, it became evident that some of the teenagers wore head-covering and Tzizios flying outside, as the Ashkenazi custom. This caused serious upset with prominent Israeli religious leaders, who rightfully understand the *pasok* **את כל מצוותי אתם** as a reminder to Jewish people to remember and fulfil ALL possible mitzvos so we can fix our mindset, our attributes and our society (Rambam Morei Nevochim vol. 3 ch. 28). This is clearly not the case with these teenagers, who see the Mitzvah of Tzizis as a superstitious charm for successful life – clearly it did not help them, and the **חילול השם** they caused with their Tzizis will be remembered for years.



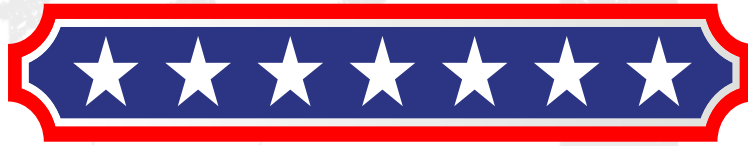


Yemanu Binyamin Zelka, z”l, was not a symbol. He was a young man, a son, a brother, and a hardworking employee who tried to do the decent thing in a moment of disorder. His murder has shaken Israel because it confronts the country with questions no healthy society can afford to ignore:

- What are we teaching our children?
- What are we tolerating in our streets?
- What does justice require?
- And what does it mean to wear the symbols of Torah while abandoning its most basic demands?

May his memory be a blessing.





## A Righteous Fight-By Jacob Diament

---

The war in Iran is highly unpopular in the US. Let's examine the reasons for that situation while at the same time let's consider the merits of the decisions made by the US and Israel. In the Jewish world blaming Anti Semitism is common and there is little doubt that this is a factor. There are many voices with large audiences making not so subtle insinuations accusing America of doing Israel's bidding. I believe that there are other currents driving public opinion which are more at play:

- The dramatic increase in the price of gas. This is something which affects most people and is visible every time one passes a fuel station.
- The downstream inflationary effects caused by high energy prices.
- The general anti-war sentiment particularly given the bad tastes left by previous far away wars.
  - Lack of understanding the geopolitical landscape.
  - And frankly the disinterest in history and its lessons.

For Israelis there is no confusion about the war. Almost unanimously the population understands the existential nature of the threat and the need to confront the danger before it's too late. Life during constant sirens, day and night is very difficult but it's a necessary reality of the war.

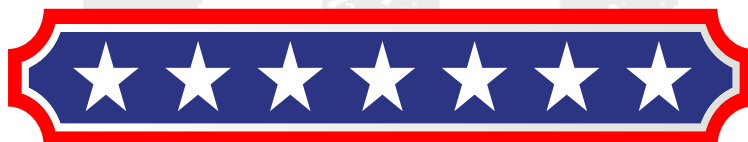
Going back to the question of justification, I contend that there is no question. The IRGC is a brutal regime with stated genocidal goals and a 47-year track record of working tirelessly toward these goals. This is a regime which has nuclear ambitions and a massive program to accomplish these ambitions, there is also the matter of a long-range missile and attack drone program. We know what they want to do, they haven't masked their goals. This is a regime which massacred its own citizens and continues to execute and imprison people whose only crime is a desire for freedom.

I have heard it said that the IRGC poses no imminent threat. This is a lazy, baseless narrative not supported by reality or history. What does imminent mean? A month? A year? Shouldn't the Nazis have been confronted before they invaded Poland? Shouldn't the US have joined WWII before Pearl Harbour? World history is littered with regimes which murdered millions, but whose threat wasn't considered imminent. I think there is no question that the war on the IRGC is a righteous and legitimate action.

Without going into US politics too much it is still clear that the decision to engage the IRGC has severe political capital costs. The decision to go forward with it should be taken as a 'right thing to do' in a historical sense, it's not more complicated than simply confronting evil.

Given the toxic nature of the political landscape, opposition to the war can be viewed as opportunistic and disingenuous. We can only hope that the decision makers continue to have the courage to do the right thing.

---



# Jewish Community Events and Israel

**14th Jewish Film Festival May 26 - June 3**  
Powerful Stories, Personal Voices.

Curated by Film Scholar, Curator, and Writer David Schwartz  
Sponsored by Longmead Fort Lee Residents and BFC  
Founding Board Members Edwin and Doree Cohen  
longmeadfortlee.org  
1 Rak Ave, Fort Lee, NJ 07024  
201.985.0601

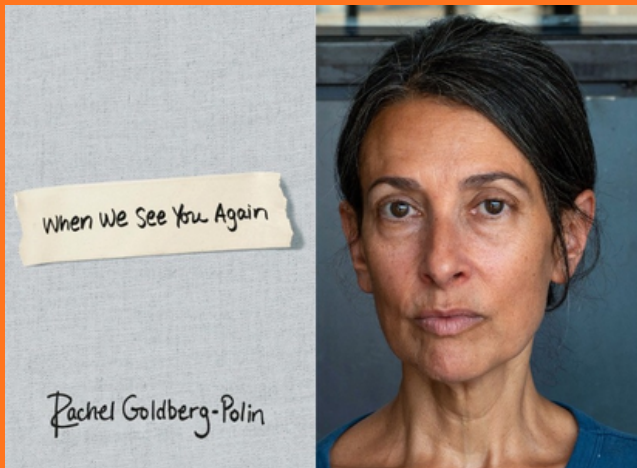
To see listings of movies and Order Tickets click [Here!](#)



*In **Out of the Sky**, journalist and author Matti Friedman details the true story of a 1944 joint British-Jewish operation where young Jews who had escaped the Holocaust to pre-state Israel volunteered to parachute back into Nazi-occupied Europe.*

*The narrative centers on four main figures, most notably Hannah Senesh, a 23-year-old poet whose diary, poetry, and tragic death turned her into an enduring Israeli national legend. The book also spotlights Enzo Sereni, Haim Hermesh (the sole survivor of the four), and Haviva Reick.*

*Friedman explores the profound moral choice these volunteers made—traveling backward toward danger instead of seeking safety—and how their stories were transformed into vital, enduring myths that helped define the rebirth of Israel*



*In her book, “When We See You Again,” released April 21st, Rachel Goldberg-Polin gets granular with grief. She makes us not just a reader but a witness to her story of loving her son, Hersh Goldberg-Polin, and the heart-shattering journey of trying and failing to get him back alive after he was taken hostage by Hamas on October 7.*

*“The book is about two things and two things only, and that is love and pain,” Goldberg-Polin told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. “This is not a memoir. This is not a tell-all... This is really just pain in words.”*

## SPRING-SUMMER EVENTS

FRI-SAT MAY 22-23	SHAVUOT
SUN, MAY 24	<u>COMMUNITY SOFTBALL GAME</u> FOLLOWED BY PIZZA
SUN, JUNE 14	<u>BOWLING NIGHT</u> FOR ADULTS
TUES, JUNE 23	<u>ANNUAL MEETING</u> + ICE CREAM SOCIAL
FRI, JULY 3	<u>BBQ SHABBAT DINNER</u>
SUN, JULY 12	<u>SUMMER HIKE</u> AT RAMAPO VALLEY COUNTY RESERVATION

For More Information Visit:  
[www.ahavatachim.org/aa-events/upcoming-events/](http://www.ahavatachim.org/aa-events/upcoming-events/)