breaking the glass ceiling
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome 4
Letter from the Tamuz Team
Note from Our Founders

Opinion 10
The Glass Ceiling
A Modern Story of Freedom and Rebirth

Features 18
Not Just a Number
Grassroots Peace

Conversation 30
Israel’s First Ethiopian Minister,
Pnina Tamano-Shata

Artists 38
Straight from Israel’s Runway

Cuisine 46
Cauli-jadara with Oz Telem

Face the Music 50
with Karen Peles

Inspirational Israeli 52
10 Questions for Irad Eichler

Coming Up at the J 54
In January we launched TAMUZ with our first winter issue. Thank you for all your comments, good words, and for joining the programs associated with the magazine, such as the exclusive meetup with singer/songwriter Elai Botner and our climate change discussion with Jakir Manela, CEO of Hazon and Pearlstone, and Morielle Lotan, founder and CEO at MILE Ventures and founder at Climate 180 Forum.

With Passover around the corner, the idea of freedom is in the air. Freedom can mean a lot of things for a lot of people. It is both a social movement toward peace as well as a personal achievement. It is the long journey that the people of Israel took to get to the promised land, as well as women “breaking the glass ceiling” and achieving success and recognition for their work on a par with men. There are many people who had to break glass ceilings to get to where they are today. We decided to shine a light on some of them in this issue.

People in our community are breaking their own glass ceilings every day, in many paths of life, by challenging the status quo of daily life. It could be seen in our swim instructors at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan who continued to provide for the community during the pandemic. It was the nurse that stayed with a patient to hold their hand when they couldn't
have family near. It is the ongoing need to provide the space for a friend to be themselves. It is our ability to hold space for and accept our mental health struggles, and reach out for help when needed.

This season, we hope that we can all think about our own individual glass ceilings. What is holding us back, be it societally or personally? How can we support ourselves and others to break through that ceiling to reach greater heights of freedom? We must recognize, too, that these efforts are constant and generational, always moving and changing, and not just a one-time push.

In March, the JCC launched a Re-Connect Campaign, a reminder of how important gathering together for activities, discussion, and celebrations can be in helping each of us to re-energize, re-bound, re-strengthen, and re-learn after so many months of pandemic-related isolation. We hope you will join us soon for some of our in-person events. For some it is easy, for some it is hard, but we are here for you. Together we will stand and bring our lives back to where they were. We will re-connect, be stronger, and break through the new glass ceiling before us.

Have a great spring,

The TAMUZ Team
This second issue, with the theme “breaking the glass ceiling,” provides an opportunity for us to share the story of our family, the Sonabends, who broke many glass ceilings for the existence of Israel. We hope the story of our parents and grandparents will light the spark of Israel within your hearts, just as it did for us.

Ten years ago, we dedicated The David H. Sonabend Center for Israel at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan in memory of our beloved father, whose passion for Israel infused our family life. The Center has memorialized him in the best way possible by promoting dialogue, education, and commitment within the Jewish and Israeli communities, just as our father made it his life’s mission to do.

Hilda and Abraham (Abe) Sonabend, our grandparents, first went to Israel in 1936, when it was still Palestine. They went to help plant trees on the kibbutz Ma’ale Hahamisha that Abe’s cousin, Menachem Katz, and three other men from Poland were building. Kibbutz Ma’ale Hahamisha, located on the outskirts of Jerusalem, is still thriving today.
Abe’s mother, Gitel Sonabend, our great grandmother, emigrated to Israel after World War II with the body of her husband, to be buried. Gitel settled in B’nai Brak, where she founded a charity to provide doweries for poor Orthodox women. Abe was a major contributor to this endeavor. Only after Gitel’s death, when an article was written about her, did we realize how many hundreds of young girls she had helped.

Dr. David H. Sonabend was Abe and Hilda’s oldest son. He and his wife Roslyn took their first trip to Israel in 1954, when Roslyn was pregnant with our brother Andrew. They toured the country and spent time with Menachem on the kibbutz and with Grandma Gitel. Gitel only spoke Yiddish, as she believed Hebrew was a holy language; David, who was fluent in Yiddish, was able to communicate with her and together they taught Roslyn the language. Gitel lived to be 98 years old and, before she passed away, there were five generations of Sonabends, including her first great-great grandson.

We were Abe and Hilda’s first grandchildren, and their delight in having twin girls was unmatched. They traveled with us in the U.S., and when we were 16 years old, took us on a grand tour of Europe, which included a month in Israel. The year was 1963. During this time, we could only look at the Old City from outside and guards were posted everywhere. We spent several days at Ma’ale HaHamisha, where Menachem took us to the top of a hill where we could see Jordan right below, barren, and dry. When we returned years later, after the Six Day War, Menachem took us to that same hill, where the land in front of us was now Israel. It was green as far as the eye could see, a testament to the industriousness of Israelis. We swam in the huge pool in Herzliya, had mud baths at Ein Gedi, and visited Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Akko, Tiberias, Golan Heights, Safed, and more.

Our father David was an incredibly learned Jew; he loved Torah study and participated in weekly discussions. He was a leader of his synagogue and an active fundraiser to
help it thrive. His greatest contribution was to the growth of the JCC movement. He was chairman of the Beach Y in Long Beach, New York, and presided over its merger with the JCC in neighboring Oceanside. The Beach Y building was named by our family in his memory.

David was a much beloved pediatrician in Long Beach and nearby towns. He made three dozen house calls a day during flu season, answered his phone in the middle of the night for emergencies, and was the doctor for the high school football team. Years after he retired, patients would call him for advice, and many were inspired by him to become physicians.

And so, two of David’s greatest passions were Israel and the JCC. What could be more fitting than memorializing him by naming the David H. Sonabend Center for Israel at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan?

Each day at The David H. Sonabend Center has been so meaningful for us, as we have experienced its growth over the past decade. We have been privileged to get to know our wonderful partners on the Center’s Advisory Council and the professionals who have carried out the mission. The Center for Israel has given us balanced perspectives on the issues that Israel faces and the ability to have intelligent, informative, and civil dialogue surrounding such issues. It has helped us to welcome and craft meaningful programming for Israelis living in New York City as well as enabled us to understand and be more sensitive to Israeli perspectives on American Jewish life. It has increased our knowledge of politics, arts, and culture, enriching the work of many of the other centers at the JCC.

We know our father is smiling from above.

With deepest gratitude,

Sheila Lambert  
Chair, Development Committee  
Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan

Erica Frederick  
Chair, Advisory Council  
The David H. Sonabend Center for Israel
Are women the ones losing because glass ceilings are stopping them from fulfilling all their dreams and possibilities? Of course, the answer is yes, in many ways. But nevertheless, they are definitely not the only ones paying the price. Women would gain all kinds of personal benefits from being able to present their strength and talents fully, but as a society we would all gain much more.

For generations, human kind has been lacking the fruits and outcomes of inventions by women, solutions to world problems offered by women, and inspiring ideas from women, if only their voice would have been heard. For the past century or so there has been increased awareness of the economic consequences of a low rate of women’s participation in the workforce. A parallel awareness of the civic consequences of a lack of women’s participation in the public arena has not become high enough yet.

I say this first and foremost to myself. In the past decade I have started to speak up in different spheres of the public world: in academia, in the Orthodox rabbinic world, in politics and in public discussion. I was very surprised to discover my opinion mattered to others. That it could actually make a difference, and that many people were eager to hear what I had to say. Again and again, I was surprised to discover that important things were waiting for me to dare in order to happen. That all I had to do was speak up, and the impact would be clear, that just saying out loud what seemed obvious to me could change the way other people thought and acted. When that happens I find myself asking, slightly ashamed: “What else hasn’t happened yet in the world because I haven’t tried?”

It is not always all that easy, of course. Although the metaphor of glass ceilings over the heads of women is mostly used to emphasize the way in which unseen obstacles can make feminine progress impossible, it does have other metaphoric relevance, too. For example, the bang on the head you might be surprised to feel when you accidently bump into the glass ceiling, not expecting it to be where it is. Or all the little fragments of glass that fall on you when the ceiling actually crashes, metaphorically cutting you as they fly around. Can we be privileged enough to find
ways to slide the glass ceiling open, without it breaking? Can we maybe mark the ceiling in order to have men and women notice it in advance, and make sure to avoid it? Sometimes I feel more confident giving a positive answer to these questions, sometimes not that much, but I do think these are questions we should try to ask and answer as a society. Glass ceilings can also be a wonderful greenhouse when planned correctly and made in the right way; can we make that happen?

The life I live today is a life that, as a child and even a younger woman, I never thought I would see a woman living this way, let alone that it would be the way I conduct myself. I am still a young woman, not totally sure “what I will be when I grow up.” I do know that when I am old enough to sum up my lifetime, it will include many things that I cannot yet imagine.

In many ways, we are still paving the next section of the road, still pushing the wheels of the cart of history through the mud. It is not always a nice experience; in many ways it is unpleasant and confusing, but the cart keeps moving, taking us to new avenues and adventures. The more people pushing in the mud and paving the way, instead of sitting on the cart and complaining or bothering the ones working in the mud, the easier it will get. After all, it is not like we really have much of a choice. We can only do our best and hope to have as many people, men and women, be part of this important work.

Tirza Kelman is an academic researcher on Jewish thought and halacha (Jewish law) at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, where she earned her Ph.D. in 2018. Currently a fellow at the Herbert D. Katz Center at Penn University, she works with the most pressing issues in Orthodox women’s lives as a yoetzet halacha, a female Orthodox halachic authority. Since 2007, she has also served as director of the Hebrew Nishmat Yoatzot Halakha website. She is a public activist in Israel, previously involved in empowering religious women’s political activity.

The Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan is proud to host regular forums for ideas that allow for open conversation and dialogue on topics related to Israel and the world. We present this op-ed section in a similar vein: in the hope that open, honest dialogue will take root, and that we may participate in that dialogue with you, our community. To reach us with your thoughts, email Rebecca Grossman at rgrossman@mmjccm.org.
Israelis are realizing that Zionism is only one chapter of the Jewish story. Now we want to enjoy the whole book.

—Kobi Oz, Israeli songwriter, artist, and leader of a daily Talmud class for secular Israelis

And you shall tell your child on that day...

—Exodus 13:8 and the Haggadah (The Telling)

The fundamental insight of Passover is that our stories matter. How we tell our stories impacts our present and our future. Stories are not about the past. We dedicate two evenings a year to think about how we tell our children the story of our freedom and why this story is important for our future. I’d like to tell you a couple of stories; true stories; modern-day miracles of what our people are doing with the gift of freedom.

The first story begins with a 21-year-old woman serving in the Israeli army, stationed in Hebron. Her experience there unfolded very differently from how she had imagined it would.

As a so-called “secular” Jew, she did not anticipate feeling connected to the ultra-Orthodox Jews of the city. The entrenched narratives of Israeli society had taught her to view Jewish identity as binary: you are either dati (religious) or hiloni (secular), and between the two identities is an unbridgeable chasm. Yet, sitting in the guardhouse, this young woman saw things differently: in fact, she felt very connected to the ultra-Orthodox Jews around her. Although she was certainly different from them in many ways, she experienced her Jewishness as deep and authentic, and viewed herself—and them—as part of the larger collective of Am Yisrael.

A context that could easily have been Jewishly alienating had been transformed into an experience of spiritual connection and nourishment during the trying time of her army service. And she had the rabbi of her youth to thank. This Reform rabbi, in her hometown of Modiin, had opened up the possibility that Judaism had something to say to someone who lived in the secular world. He had inspired her to see Judaism as her heritage, and herself as an authentic member of a broad and diverse people. One evening, in the quiet hours between her guard duty shifts, this young Israeli soldier wrote a thank-you note to this rabbi, her
Can we use Jewish living and learning to build joyous, deeply connected communities?
spiritual leader and role model, grateful for the gift of Jewish identity she knew so many of her peers had never received.

This individual story takes place within a much larger narrative, one that is being written by emerging spiritual leaders across the State of Israel. These stories are not being told sufficiently, yet they have tremendous consequences for the future of the Jewish people, both in Israel and in America.

Sure, most Jewish Americans have a prideful appreciation of the magnificent explosion of Israeli entrepreneurial talent in the tech sector over the last 20 years. However, what is not talked about is the cultural and Jewish renaissance burgeoning in the State of Israel. Similar to their peers in the tech industry, Israeli spiritual entrepreneurs have begun to unleash and leverage an enormous amount of creative energy in order to reimagine what it means to live in Jewish community.

For too long, too many Israelis (by their own admission!) have felt like strangers within Jewish culture and religion. They are alienated by the narrow iteration of Judaism sponsored and authorized by the government. Anyone who cares about the future of the Jewish State and the dynamism of the Jewish people must care about this story still being written. Israelis want to return “home” on their own terms and rebuild a new relationship to Judaism. They want to forge new conversations between Judaism and Zionism in order to write a new Jewish future.

Like so many of us, Israelis are asking: Can Judaism and Jewish community help us meaningfully navigate the great human existential questions of our moment? Can we use Jewish living and learning to help us build face-to-face, joyous communities where people feel truly seen and deeply connected?

The Honey Foundation for Israel is leveraging this grassroots, Israeli creativity for the benefit of Jews everywhere. The Honey Foundation invests in spiritual entrepreneurs who harness the energy of entrepreneurship along with the power of Judaism to create an Israeli society that is more open, connected and reflective of our Jewish values. We identify and cultivate
outstanding leaders, providing them with the resources to help them innovate and maximize their impact.

At the moment, we support 46 dynamic spiritual leaders, most of whom call themselves rabbis and all of whom are change agents for a new Jewish future. Each one of our Honey Fellows serves as a leader of a Jewish community helping more Israelis, like that young woman doing guard duty in Hebron, find their “home” within Jewish living and community.

Our Honey Fellows represent the great tapestry of Israeli Jewish expression. The first woman rabbi to be appointed as a leader of an Orthodox community is a Honey Fellow. Now, a new generation of Orthodox boys and girls will grow up seeing a talented woman rabbi leading their community. Once such doors are opened, who knows what blessings will yet come?

And these investments have critical impact beyond the Israeli scene.

American Jews need new models of spiritual leadership. Most American Jews, certainly the younger generation, are not walking through the doors of our synagogues and Temples. Our investments empower new models of rabbinic work for the building of communities of meaning. The Honey Foundation seeks to inspire entrepreneurial models for rabbinic engagement that may assist such work in America.

Some of us tell the story of how Jews everywhere are connected. Most often this narrative is framed by hardship or antisemitism. People want to kill Jews in Jerusalem, Paris, Dallas, and Pittsburgh. Truly our fates are always interconnected. But this is only half of the coin. There is another story. Our stories of creativity and reimagination are also interconnected. Jewish innovation and reimagining on one side of the ocean can inspire Jewish identity and renaissance on the other.

We just need to begin to tell these stories.
In Honor of Israel and Our Wonderful JCC

Ruth and Peter Goodstein
Miriam Restaurant opened up its location in the Upper West Side in January 2022, bringing the atmosphere and food of our Israeli restaurant to Manhattan. We offer Mediterranean food staples such as hummus, falafel, shawarma, schnitzel and spanakopita. Join us for an unforgettable experience!

miriamrestaurant.com
A children’s clothing ad demonstrates how images of women can be erased from the public, a signal that they are not to be seen or heard.
Despite the existence of democracies since at least 1776, with the establishment of the United States, the ninth century CE (if you include Iceland’s local parliaments) and 430 BCE (if you want to include ancient Athens), no woman was elected as a head of state until 1940, when Khertek Amyrbitovna Anchimaa-Toka became Chairwoman of Little Khural of the Tuvan People’s Republic. Another two decades passed before Sirimavo Bandaranaike was elected as Prime Minister of Ceylon and Sri Lanka, in 1960, and 1966 that Indira Gandhi was elected as Prime Minister of India. Israel became the fourth country to elect a woman head of state, when Golda Meir became the country’s fourth prime minister, serving from 1969 to 1974. According to the United Nations, as of 2021, only 26 women serve as heads of state in 24 countries, only 25% of all national parliamentarians are women, and only three countries, Rwanda, Cuba, and Bolivia, have reached 50-50 parity in lower and/or local government representation.

Why is gender parity so important?
In the economic realm, it has clear benefits. According to a Standard & Poor’s report presented in 2019 to the World Economic Forum’s Annual Meeting, if the labor force participation rate of men and women were equal, the U.S. economy would be 8.7% larger.

More deeply, the Austrian Ambassador to Switzerland and former Austrian Minister of European and Foreign Affairs Ursula Plassnik highlights, in her conversation with author Susan Sloan in A Seat at the Table: Women, Diplomacy, and Lessons for the World, that “a woman’s lens can reveal the realities of what the fabric of society is facing. Because many basic societal issues usually begin within a home.” It is only when women’s voices are heard that we can truly address the problems society faces and properly create and institute policies which create a better reality for all.

Women are, in general, highly educated and consistently proving that they would make...
good candidates for positions of power and leadership. Women are always improving themselves and searching for ways to learn and grow. So why is it that they do not appear in higher positions of power?

To get a better understanding, I spoke with Dr. Mazal Shaul, executive director, and Dr. Orit Rishpi-Lavi, Adv., a member of the Executive Management Committee of WePower, a nonprofit, nonpartisan Israeli NGO that helps women reach top positions in government, politics, and business. WePower is also a consultant to the UN on gender matters, presenting their methodology and creating new connections with other countries.

WePower's research, training, and legislation

In 2000, WePower founder Michal Yudin decided something had to be done. She realized that while other organizations were focusing on supporting women at the lower rungs of society, none aimed to elevate women to positions of power and leadership. Not only were women dropping out of the political game early, there was no data to truly understand why.

In order to make changes, they first needed to understand the scope of the problem and where it was most egregious. For example, only 10% of funded, tenured academic positions were held by women. WePower research found that in 2016, women represented only 14% (341) of 2,400 city council members, 2% (6) of 257 mayors, and 27.5% of Israel’s Parliament. While the rate of women working as civil servants was 64%, only 4% held executive positions and there were none in senior management positions with government companies.

To shift these realities, women needed tools that would enable them to gain positions of leadership. WePower began offering leadership and networking training groups for women interested in entering the political arena. WePower graduates learn how to run a campaign, apply a gender lens to reading budgets, fundraise, build their agenda, and advocate for themselves in positions of higher management and leadership. The success of these programs is evident: 20% of current Knesset members, as well as mayors, are WePower graduates.

Although these steps are crucial, WePower leadership realized they were not enough. For change to happen more quickly and effectively, policies promoting women’s
leadership needed to be incorporated into legislation. WePower looked to other legislative successes, such as affirmative action in America, to create systems that encourage more women in leadership; for example, reducing the timeframe required for boards of publicly traded companies to reach 50-50 representation.

Another great example of effective legislation incentivized parties to include women higher up in their voting list and thus ensure they enter the political arena. In locations where the proportion of women elected made up more than 30% of a local party list, the party would receive 5% more public funding. If two out of three individuals of a party elected were women, the party would receive an additional 15% more in public funding for the second woman than if that position were filled by a man.

Through WePower’s work, representation has significantly increased, with the share of women on the boards of directors at governmental companies increasing from 30% to 44%, and with men accounting for 30% of orthodox councils in each municipality (where they formerly did not participate). A monitoring committee now in place enforces implementation of the legislation, ensuring that these are not temporary fixes, but evidence of sustainable change. More work needs to be done for the government to take full responsibility for an overall view of gender equality, including position representation, salaries, purpose, and more. WePower endeavors to continue its efforts toward this goal of a comprehensive legal solution that can be relied upon while promoting women in leadership.

The Jewish Life Photo Bank has assembled nearly 1,000 positive images depicting women in Jewish and general life activities.
It is not only numbers that must change.

It is also the chauvinistic attitudes, outdated notions of women's roles, and confusion over religious tradition vs. social trends. Understanding the gender lens and utilizing gender conscious management, for both men and women, can assist in moving past current restrictions. This is a huge ship to move, as it is deep seeded in cultures, subliminal messaging, and our own inherent thinking. In more religious and conservative communities, these norms are even more extreme.

In some religious communities, women can be told to move to the back of the bus, there are segregated stairwells, signs instructing women to dress a certain way or announcing they are not allowed in specific areas; women are even erased from any public images. Some may claim that we must allow for such stringent segregation of the sexes, providing space for cultural sensitivity, but would this be accepted if we replaced the word “woman” with any other people? There is no scriptural basis for such activities. Indeed, enforcing these norms only increases the likelihood of sexualizing even the most mundane of interactions between men and women, making women merely a physical and sexual object, leading to an imbalance within society.

Erasing women from images is a symptom of the way they are treated, a signal that they are not to be seen or heard, and when an individual is not seen in society, her needs are not considered. Shoshanna Keats Jaskoll, co-founder of Chochmat Nashim, provides a simple but powerful example: if you have never met someone who is disabled and you are creating a building, you would not think to build a ramp.

Chochmat Nashim works with organizations to utilize images of women in an equal measure to those of men. It has created the Jewish Life Photo Bank, with almost a thousand stock images depicting women in Jewish or general life activities. These photos provide options to represent and celebrate Jewish women in a healthy way.

Chochmat Nashim also works to increase women's leadership in local communities. Minister of Religious Affairs Matan Kahana has encouraged women to participate on religious councils, which make the most direct impact on the local community. Chochmat Nashim amplifies the voice of religious women as the key to shifting and improving religious society, and works with the communities to provide specific local actions that they can take, focusing on bottom-up change.

As individuals, what can we do to help affect change?

The leaders of WePower understand that is not the right choice for everyone. Politics can be hostile, even violent, and many women run away from such work. Hopefully it will
become more logic-driven, gentle, and respectful.

There is also a larger cultural barrier: women are still typically the primary caregivers. Luckily, Israel is a bit more of a comfortable place to raise children, with more and better daycare systems, both public and private, that allow more women to take higher positions of power. Still, it is an individual decision to make. For those who go into the field, they decide that this is who they want to be and how they want to show up for their families. For the rest of us, we must speak about the problem. The first step to making any change is recognizing that change is necessary.

We also must start advocating for ourselves. For women in the political realm, that means tapping into networks and connections, and stepping up even if they do not “check all the boxes,” as male counterparts typically do.

In our personal lives, women need to question our motivations and thinking when it comes to comparing ourselves to others, as well as our preconceptions about who we see as authority figures. If we are able to move past the concept that men and masculine traits are “superior” to women and feminine traits, then there will be space for both forms of leadership. This shift works both from top down as well as bottom up. With more examples of successful women in leadership, especially security and economic-related positions, the social bias against women leaders will lessen and more women will be accepted into these positions. The more women in these positions, the more generally representative of society our elected bodies are, the more accurate a picture of society our policymakers will have and the better our policymaking can become.
GRASSROOTS PEACE
Freedom:
1. the power to do what you want to do: the ability to move or act freely
2. the state of not being a slave, prisoner, etc.
3. the state of not having or being affected by something unpleasant, painful, or unwanted

In this season, with Pesach coming near, we think of the call for freedom. We say עבדים were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and G-d took us out from there with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm.”

Peacebuilding is at the heart of the call to freedom, taking action toward the goal of ending conflict and war, living without violence and without fear for the safety of our sons and daughters.

This very perspective motivates the women of Women Wage Peace and Women of the Sun.

Women Wage Peace, is the largest grassroots movement in Israel, with 45,000 members united “to bring about the resolution of the Israeli Palestinian conflict by means of an honorable, non-violent and mutually acceptable agreement, with the participation of women from diverse groups of the population in Israel, in accordance with UN Resolution 1325.” Established in 2014, after Operation Protective Edge in Gaza, a group of women whose sons and daughters had been involved in the operation decided that enough was enough. War is not good for anyone, and a lot of people want peace and a good future for all.

Women Wage Peace’s sister organization in the West Bank and Gaza, Women of the Sun, is a Palestinian grassroots peace movement focused on empowering Palestinian women and advocating for non-violence to bring peace to the region as well as to the women’s homes. The first such movement in the Palestinian community, it was established last fall and already claims 1,000 members in the West Bank, with 50 women and two coordinators in Gaza.

Suheir Freitekh, a Women of the Sun founder, has worked on peace initiatives and peace projects with Israeli and Palestinian
NGOs and government entities, and built relationships with diplomatic missions. She organizes field trips to conflict areas in Palestine for journalists, diplomats and relevant activists, and researches politics and economics. Suheir was inspired in her work by a pivotal experience in the ‘90s when, during the peace process, she had the opportunity to meet Israelis in their homes and realized that they wanted peace and a positive future for their children just as much as she did.

The movements offer options for activism: promoting the mission by standing with signs on their corner for a couple hours, speaking with the public and passersby; organizing parlor meetings; and “couch action,” through social media, and online messaging. Some women attend Knesset committees and speak on behalf of Women Wage Peace, also making connections with supporters from all over the world. For those outside Israel, the emphasis is on spreading the word, hosting webinars, and making contacts with organizations, researchers, and resources.

Women Wage Peace is unique in that it truly focuses on diversity and spans the political spectrum. Jews, Christians, Muslims, Druze, right, left—all stand united in the call for peace. This diverse representation of identity and thought is backed by a massive grassroots movement, unlike any other organization. Typically, such a large grassroots operation has a specific political platform and is associated with one side of the spectrum or the other; alternatively, a movement with such diversity has thus far not gained as much popularity. This “politics of confusion” is what keeps Women Wage Peace so interesting, opening doors both in the grassroots movement and with politicians on both sides of the political spectrum.

**What makes these organizations so successful? The unifying factor of womanhood.**

Though being a woman may be more a cultural than biological identity, the ability to connect as women has afforded these organizations a great advantage in building the movement. They can connect with others; with other women across the political spectrum in Israel as well as with Palestinian partners. A certain level of trust is built merely from the shared identity and perspective of being women.

During one gathering in the south, while
talking about life and family, an Arab Israeli activist started singing a lullaby in Arabic. A Mizrahi Jewish woman, on the right wing of the political map, responded that her grandmother had sung the same lullaby to her. Such moments of shared humanity build trust between individuals and can ultimately lead to grassroots peace between peoples.

Being a group of women inherently brings a different dynamic, both for those getting involved and for organizational perspective. In general, women use a different, more empathic language, typically focused less on the ego and more on the common good and care for their communities. As mothers and caretakers, women have a different way of looking at conflict. They witness the homefront costs of war, the costs not factored in calculations of military engagement.

Indeed, when women have been involved in conflict resolution, such as in Liberia and Ireland, peace agreements have been reached more quickly, and have been more inclusive and sustainable. Women focused on matters of water, resources, and living together, making agreements more stable and long-lasting than those merely focused on borders and leadership. At the root, women focus on the needs of the people.

A key stereotype that plays to their
advantage is that women are considered less intimidating. People assume that women do not understand the hard subjects, such as security, even though there are women generals in the army. Though this leads politicians to be more willing to meet with them rather than male activists, it requires them to “prove” themselves. With more women in leadership roles, both Jews and Arabs, this assumption is slowly changing. However, it is still an uphill battle for grassroots organizations to work in such a masculine environment, and the need for more women in decision-making positions is crucial for moving forward.

Amal Abou Ramadan, an Arab Muslim volunteer with Women Wage Peace, shares her story. When Amal was born, she was named Phalistine, reminiscent of the state of Palestine and the non-Semitic people of ancient southern Palestine, who came into conflict with the Israelites during the 12th and 11th centuries BCE. Originally she went to a private school, but when her father had to close his restaurant she moved to public school. One day a Jewish administrator at the school came to her class and asked aggressively, “Who is Phalestine? Who would have such a violent name?” She raised her hand and said her name was Amal. She returned home in tears, asking her father why he had named her Phalistine. From that point forward she changed her name to Amal, meaning “hope,” to represent the hope that things will change. She vowed to make changes in society so that no one would have to move or change their name. Now the mother of four children, she teaches Arabic language, this year expanding to include Jewish pupils, and also teaches Islam in the Christian school in Jaffa. Her father was so happy when she became part of Women Wage Peace and expressed the hope that she would continue in this way to make peace.

Indeed, that is what these women plan to do. Together, these two sister movements drafted The Mother’s Call, a petition demanding an end to the conflict and for Palestinian and Israeli leaders to come together. (Read and sign the online petition here.) Their call, a balance between sensitivity and strength, is unique; women from both sides of the conflict agreed upon the text, demonstrating that the people want peace and that it is time for leaders to listen, and sit down together at the negotiation table. As American Jews, we can spread the message of these women that there is a partner and both Israelis and Palestinians are striving toward peace. They know there will be obstacles on both sides, but it is crucial to take the first step in a 1,000-mile journey.

Click here to sign up for the Women Wage Peace newsletter, available in four languages.

To support Women of the Sun, email Suheir Freitekh at fsuheir@gmail.com.
730 Columbus Avenue @ 96th Street
New York, NY 10025
212-865-7070

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Ask for Gary!
When she was three years old, during Operation Moses, the evacuation of Ethiopian Jews from Sudan, Pnina Tamano-Shata was separated in the desert from her mother and two sisters. However, this tragic event didn’t stop Pnina and her father from continuing their journey to make Aliyah to Israel. Almost 30 years later, Pnina found herself standing on the podium at the Knesset being sworn in as first Ethiopian-born woman to enter the Knesset in 2013. Cheering her on were her father, mother, sisters, and brothers—reunited in Israel.

TAMUZ had the opportunity to interview Minister Tamano-Shata to learn about her journey and her motivation to succeed. She did not just break the glass ceiling, she smashed it.

Tell us about your childhood. What do you remember about the immigration process to Israel?

The Aliyah experience is a once-in-a-lifetime experience and even though 37 years have passed, it is the most significant event that changed my life.

I was born in a Jewish Village named Wesba in Ethiopia, and my name in Amharic is Fanta, which means “My Share,” as I was born immediately after my older sister passed away. In Ethiopia, my parents buried four children, and despite this, they maintained faith and optimism, chose life, and to focus on their big dream to make Aliyah to Eretz Israel. And the dream was realized in 1984, during Operation Moses, when all of my family members, the residents of the Jewish village where I lived, and over 10,000 additional Ethiopian Jews started marching towards Israel through Sudan.

Unfortunately, during the journey, I was separated from my mother and my two
sisters, who were left behind in the refugee camp in Sudan. One of the trucks that was driving us to the airplane during the late hours of the night collapsed due to overcrowding and did not reach its destination. I remember that night vaguely. We arrived from the refugee camp in the crowded truck to the Israeli Hercules plane, which landed in a secret operation in the heart of the desert. Only when the airplane’s doors had shut did we understand that my mother—together with my older sister and my baby sister who was born in the camp—was not with us. It was incredibly difficult to make Aliyah to Israel when we left behind the dearest to us.

What was the most challenging aspect of being an immigrant, and how has it affected your life?

The beginning in Israel was difficult and even tragic, and only thanks to their Aliyah, a year later, my family and I were able to reunite again, take a deep breath, and start our new life in Israel. The parting from my mother at such a young age shaped my life choices to work with at-risk youth, and these days, to reunite Olim families, among them those remaining Ethiopian Jews waiting to make Aliyah, sons and daughters that live apart from their parents, torn between two continents.

From the moment of my arrival, I felt as Israeli as you can be. Although the conclusion of the Aliyah journey began a long, no less complex journey of integration. I remember my first steps in Israel, at the absorption center in Pardes Hana to which I arrived with my siblings and my dear father, as we got to know the new language, the new surroundings, the new white people, the Israeli culture and mentality that was louder and more vibrant, and much modernization we had not been acquainted with in our village in Ethiopia.

The challenge was to connect the big dream of the Return to Zion, Shivat Zion with the new realities of Israeli society. The mental and cultural gaps were very large, and the challenges for the elders that arrived, also for my parents, were even greater.

My childhood and coming of age as an Olah from Ethiopia was intricate also, due to the difference in skin color, as well as economic, cultural, and mindset gaps. My siblings and I acclimated quite quickly. However, my parents had few material means to provide what other children had. We received support from the integration authorities, among them the Jewish Agency. Yet soon enough many of the children who had arrived from Ethiopia were sent to boarding schools and to educational frameworks far from their parents’ homes. Signs of racism started to gain momentum as time passed, an ugly phenomenon that did not drop our spirits but that we knew and were acquainted with.

The childhood experience, starting from the life in the absorption center, going to work at a very young age, and over to the boarding
school and dealing with the feeling of being different in Israeli society turned me into the person that I am, influencing my choice to become a lawyer, later a journalist, and then, at age 31, to join Israeli politics. The Minister I am today, and my vision for the field of Aliyah and integration in Israel, was built by layers upon layers of my personal experience as an Olah, and the community that for thousands of years in the diaspora had preserved the dream of Zion. My life experience is a pillar in my ministerial road, especially when it comes to critical and significant decision-making for the Olim public.

In 2021, over 28,000 new Olim made Aliyah to Israel, among them 30% under the age of 18. They are the future generation, and it is our duty to provide them with all the tools needed to pave their way in Israeli society. I know the feeling of being an Oleh child who has to be a mediator between his parents and life in Israel—the linguistic challenges, the acclimation into different educational and social systems—all these and more stand before me when I make important decisions to strengthen and expand tools and support for the optimal integration of new Olim.

What inspired you to get involved in politics?

During the most difficult moments, my parents used to smile and give thanks that they were in Israel. They lived in simplicity and modesty, with much thankfulness for the realization of the fathers. But very soon I understood that the fathers’ dream would not be complete without us working for equal opportunity, that all of Am Israel will live in brotherhood, as Shevet Achim, and not as 12 tribes.

At a very young age I understood that quite a few challenges face Ethiopian Jews, especially the younger generation, like me, who grew up in or were born in Israel. I understood that no one will bring the change for us. We could have dealt with many challenges, but with the phenomenon of racism and discrimination I understood that public awareness is required. And yes, more than once, that meant a poignant public struggle against decision makers. As a student I led protests on the matter of discrimination in blood donations by Ethiopian Jews, through to protests against the discrimination of children in the education system, police brutality, and more.

I joined the political arena and became a member of the Knesset. I was appointed to the position of Deputy Speaker, which was a huge honor for me. There, in the Knesset Plenum, I felt that Pnina, the three-year old girl, had won many challenges, and I felt pride because I knew that every child who sees me on television understands that the sky is not the limit, and that there is no door that cannot be opened. I understood that as a young member of Knesset I would need to take advantage of every minute of
my time to make change. I lobbied to fight violence against women, and for those struggling with mental health. I worked for the integration of Ethiopian Jews and new Olim and I was a member of the committee for Children’s Rights as well as the Knesset Committee, and the Committee of Internal Affairs. I led efforts to end discrimination on blood donations by Ethiopian Jews and led government decisions and significant legislation to promote the struggle against discrimination and to promote equality. I was appointed in 2020 to be the first Minister in the Israeli government from the Ethiopian Jewish community, and number two in former Chief of Staff and current Minister of Defense Benny Gantz’s “Blue and White” party’s list for the Knesset.

Who is the biggest influence and inspiration in your life?

The role models who influenced my life the most are my dear parents. I see in them strong figures who made an incredible life journey, and the amplitude of their simplicity reflects the amplitude of their power and strength—Intelligent, modest people, and Zion loving. They went through a lot in their lives, yet always found reasons to smile and to be happy. Despite the fact that they had to experience grief and the personal loss of six children, they saw themselves as fortunate parents for what they had. They always said that God gave and God has taken, and blessed each one of the children and cared for our wellbeing. They taught my siblings and I that there is no goal or dream we cannot make come true. They taught us that everything begins with faith and action. They taught me that every person in every position, no matter if it is a Prime Minister or anyone else, deserves respect, that we are all equal human beings. From them I acquired the initial confidence to break forward. They always supported me and pushed my siblings and I to acquire education and succeed. When I arrive at their modest apartment to drink Buna Ethiopian coffee, I return to my roots.

We are six sisters and one brother. Female strength was very prominent at home and influenced me, both due to my mother being a strong, opinionated independent woman in her quiet way, and also due to my sisters’ influence, as they are groundbreaking on their own.
What advice would you give a young person who wants to change the world?

The best advice I can give is to believe and not give up, and in the places that seem difficult and impossible, to remember that only those who stick to an idea with faith and determination manage to change the world. They start with one small step, and then another step, and another step. Don’t ignore social norms or social inequalities that hurt and bother you; act to change them. Love the other, because as long as you give more, you will receive much more. Our inner happiness depends to a large extent on how much we give and not necessarily on how much we receive.

What is at the top of your agenda currently?

During the last two challenging years, in which the whole world dealt with COVID-19, it has been important for me to keep Israel’s gates open for the Aliyah of Jews of the world. Israel will always be the home for Jewish people, during times of crisis just like during times of routine.

I am happy that close to 50,000 new Olim have arrived since the surge of COVID-19 in Israel. The gates to the Israeli sky stayed open. It is an achievement that I fought for in the Israeli government during a time when the skies were closed for flights to Israel and also to the countries from which the Olim were arriving. Alongside Aliyah, we must remember the importance of integration. Moving to a new country is very difficult and thus I am committed to make it easier for Olim. This is why I led a five-year national program for Aliyah and Integration that includes a holistic envelope for Aliyah candidates already in their country of origin, for their optimal preparation for Aliyah to Israel, and close accompaniment in the first decade of their lives, an increase in the eligibility to learn Hebrew, welfare assistance, emotional and social support, assistance in special employment placement, and more programs that are in the planning.

The agenda that always leads me is that all Am Israel are brothers, Israel is home and I, as Minister, will always act for all from a place of equality and justice that will not forget the most vulnerable.

Where does Israel have the greatest opportunity for positive change?

Approximately half a year ago we established a new and stable government that took Israel out of the political tangle it was in over the course of four election campaigns. The Government of Change passed a budget and changed the policy regarding dealing with COVID-19. It is a diverse government both in terms of agendas and in terms of human capital, but there is great commitment from the Ministers to put their divisions aside and work together on the important things—on the economy,
society and security. We make compromises to reach accomplishments, all in moderation.

In this government there is, for the first time, an Arab minister alongside a minister from the Ethiopian community next to a Druze minister, and nine women ministers, which is an all-time record in Israeli governments. In my eyes, this diversity is an opportunity to bring news to all parts of Israeli society, to take care of vulnerable communities, which we started doing vigorously. The diversity of opinions and people leads to better solutions and everyone gains.

Moreover, the chairman of my party, Minister of Defense Benny Gantz, works to strengthen and develop ties with central countries and actors in the Middle East, while maintaining Israel’s security. The government’s cooperation with its close friend, the United States, is strengthened.

What obstacles do immigrants in Israel face today?

Employment. COVID-19 set many health and economic challenges on humanity. And as such, new Olim that arrived in Israel had to deal not only with language challenges but also with severe unemployment. Immediately after entering my position, I asked my Ministry to conduct a study on Olim employment and unemployment data in comparison to the general population. My intuition was correct; we discovered that at the peak of the COVID outbreak, unemployment among Olim was close to 30%, while among the general population this figure stood at 20%. As a result, I expanded and developed programs to assist in employment and businesses, accompanying Olim, providing special grants and incentives to Olim and employers, providing vocational training and more.

New Olim always deal with the challenge of language. Among the first reforms I led was the extension of eligibility to learn the Hebrew language for every Oleh, from a year and a half after arrival to ten years. The Hebrew language is learned and acquired with time and the Oleh always needs to have an opportunity to complete their studies. This is in addition to the Ulpanim that are operated by us, through the World Zionist Organization, in the diaspora for Aliyah candidates. I also worked to exempt the school studies of Olim children. When there is no language the challenges are great. But often, what is important is the language of the heart, the acceptance of the other, hugging and embracing the Olim.

Something that is not always spoken of but is no less crucial is the mental challenge. Imagine that you are immigrating to a new country in the middle of a pandemic, without a language or immediate work. The mind and spirit may also be hurt. For me it is important that Olim have an attentive ear in their native language, and thus I established a mental health support hotline for Olim in
five languages. In one phone call, an entire support system is activated.

**What opportunities do you see in Israel for immigrants to "break the glass ceiling"?**

For new Olim in Israel there are many good opportunities, in comparison to any other immigrant around the world. The first thing that differentiates us from the rest of the world is that Israelis are Olim and not immigrants. To Israel, we make Aliyah! There is an arrival to a family, and this makes the big difference. The State of Israel set its vision and flag to be the home for the Jews of the world, and to tie our destiny together, as a Jewish nation all over the world. From this, we have our concern for each other in Israel, as is said “Kol Israel Arevim Ze la’Ze” — all Israel is responsible for one another.

Only in Israel, every Oleh receives an absorption basket and a special grant.

Every Oleh can receive a full scholarship for higher education.

Olim receive assistance in housing.

Olim receive priority in getting into the hi-tech profession as well as into many other fields.

Olim receive holistic support and feel that they are wanted.

The opportunities are many. All that is required is to come, and we are here with thousands of employees in the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, in the local authorities and in the Aliyah organizations to care for the Olim and to ensure their equal opportunity in integrating in Israeli society.

I also believe in the large contribution of Olim to Israel—they are the largest growth engine since the state’s establishment. Many of them are groundbreakers in their fields, and each year I give a prize to groundbreaking Olim.

**What is one of your proudest moments?**

One of the exciting moments in my life was the moment in which I was sworn in as a Minister in the Israeli government, when I stood on the Knesset podium and swore faithful allegiance to the State of Israel, its laws, and its citizens. The long journey that I made converged into one significant moment in which I had the huge honor to represent many in the Israeli government. My family and thousands of citizens watched me, and some wrote to say that they felt that this was a personal victory for them, and for Israeli society.
STRAIGHT FROM ISRAEL’S RUNWAY
Have you ever experienced Tel Aviv on a scorching summer day?

You know, one of those sweltering days when people aren’t thinking about fashion, but merely how to stay cool?

When you see many in that token uniform—no, not the olive green IDF uniform—but, rather, a tank top and Bermuda shorts?

The days of forgoing fashion during a heatwave are about to change. A fresh, new movement of fierce, bold, and impeccable young, Israeli fashion designers is bringing the pinnacle of fashion to the streets of Israel.

Shahar Avnet, Michal Mangisto, and Elisha Abargel are rising stars on Israel’s fashion scene, dazzling fashion connoisseurs with their creations. They don’t let the heat dictate style; on the contrary, they utilize their designs, fabrics, and some haute couture inspiration to create the most stylish, daring, and chic women’s warm weather wear.

Their work transcends Israel, taking on the international style scene. We can’t wait to see them on the runways of Paris, Milan, and New York Fashion Week!
Shahar Avnet

Shahar Avnet is a fashion designer and artist who graduated in 2016 from Shenkar College of Engineering, Design, and Art. In 2018, she established her namesake brand. It has quickly evolved to an international brand operating in three main channels: couture, bridal, and ready-to-wear.

Shahar made headlines after designing multiple pieces for Beyoncé, and the brand has since been embraced by local and international celebrities including Zendaya, Netta Barzilay, and Kelly Rowland. Shahar’s practice merges intangible aspects of the mind with the physical body. The collections carry meaningful personal stories, with items combining colorful fabrics and original printed artwork.

The brand’s motto, “Love Yourself,” is reflected in every aspect of the items—from comfort through shape and fabric, to photoshoots. Shahar believes that beauty is not a particular ideal, but a feeling that everyone can and should achieve through fashion.

The brand constantly challenges the thin line between art and fashion. Shahar’s pieces have been featured in various art exhibitions, including 100 Years of Local Fashion at the Israel Museum and The Ball, 2021 at the Design Museum Holon. Shahar’s production line is fully local, with a majority of items handmade in the Tel Aviv studio.

Check out Shahar’s designs on Instagram or her website: shahar-avnet.com
AKAL by Michal Mangisto

AKAL House was established in 2018 by designer Michal Mangisto. The name AKAL is deeply symbolic, as it is the name of Michal’s mother and in Amharic means “soul in my body.” Michal’s experiences, memories, and talent, in addition to the skills she has acquired over the years as a fashion designer, culminated in a fashion brand that offers a quality contemporary feel while preserving the aesthetics of traditional Ethiopian embroidery.

In AKAL’s timeless collection, each garment tells a story and has a personal identity that speaks of longing and exile, as well as the search for an anchor within that identity through handicrafts. It is an unconventional and captivating mix, similar to the carefully selected fabrics of pieces in the collection.

The result is standout pieces for women who simply love style and express themselves by wearing unique fashion items. The collection is accessible and defies seasonal limitations. Michal’s emphasis on sustainable values is reflected in the uncompromising use of natural materials, as well as handcrafted techniques for dyeing fabrics that preserve the basic properties of the raw material, thus allowing clothes endless closet life, without compromising the appearance and preservation of fabrics.

AKAL also places value on fair employment through determined social action, integrating the talents of talented women from the Ethiopian community. They embroider beautiful designs on canvas sheets that tell a story on the garment while allowing them to be notable members of Israel’s creative working society.

Check out Michal’s designs on Instagram or her website: akalonline.com
Elisha Abargel

Elisha Abargel is an award-winning Tel Aviv designer who is inspired by the city’s kinetic energy, vibrant colors, sunlit blue skies, and the Mediterranean Sea. His designs are distinctive and as timeless as they are contemporary.

Elisha’s collections are a mix between tailored fashion and sportswear, made for the bold, vibrant and creative woman. He borrows fabrics and silhouettes from streetwear, sportswear and professional attire for constructed, tailored cuts.

Known for his unique work process, Elisha starts by creating the design motifs by hand and then uses advanced technology to digitally create the fabric. His clothes often combine classic materials, like leather, silk, and linen, with digitally created mesh and other technical materials.

By pairing traditional craftsmanship with the latest technologies, Elisha’s clothes depict a yearning for the romanticism of the days of yore with a twist of today’s modern tech scene, just like the place he calls home. This signature style brings loyal customers from all over the world to his studio and shop, located right off the trendy Rothschild Boulevard in the heart of Tel Aviv.

Check out Elisha’s designs on Instagram or his website: elisha-abargel.com
Almost 15 years ago, Oz Telem decided to turn his passion into a profession. He started business school, and took several cooking courses. During the three years it took to complete his bachelor’s degree (he would go on to complete an MBA at IDC Herzliya, now known as Reichman University) he worked as a line cook at a local restaurant, gaining hands-on practical experience running busy dinner services, and wrote recipes and food-related articles for the student magazine, learning the basics of the content world. Oz translated Gordon Ramsay’s book, Healthy Appetite, into Hebrew and worked as an editor and recipe developer for one of Israel’s most popular content portals. He has written and developed hundreds of recipes for magazines, local brands, and other media outlets.

Oz’s Hebrew food blog (The Kitchen Coach) has become one of the most popular food sites in Israel. In it, the 35-year-old explains the what, how, and whys of the cooking world, focusing on simple, homey dishes. Lots of photos, tips, and explanations to help food lovers at all levels of skill and from all walks of life achieve success in their daily cooking.

Oz is obsessed with cauliflower and has a bestselling cookbook dedicated to this vegetable. Take a look here or check out his Instagram.
ADI'S CAULI-JADARA
(Rice and Brown Lentil Mujadara with Caramelized Cauliflower)
from Cauliflower, by Oz Telem

*Mujadara* is a Middle Eastern staple of caramelized onions mixed with lentils and rice or bulgur wheat (varying by location). Like many great dishes, it was considered a poor man’s food, a way to transform cheap ingredients into a wholesome meal.

This take on *mujadara* was created by my wife, Adi. She told me that after all the months I have been feeding her with my cauliflower experiments, she decided to test something on me, and boy was that a success! Later that day we invited friends for dinner. One of them does not like onions, in any shape or form, so he was also pleased with Adi’s creation, now officially named Cauli-jadara.

Feel free to play around in the spice section of the recipe. I used cumin, turmeric, and coriander seeds, but even ground allspice works great here.

*Serves 4–5, 25 minutes work time, 3 hours including soak time; vegan, gluten-free*

### Ingredients

**For the rice and lentils:**

- 1 cup green or brown lentils, soaked in plenty of water for 2 hours
- 1 cup basmati rice, soaked in plenty of water for 2 hours
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. ground turmeric
- 3 cups water
- 1 scant tsp. fine salt (or more to taste)

**For the caramelized cauliflower:**

- 1 small to medium cauliflower
- 1/3 cup (80 ml, 3 fl oz.) oil (preferably olive oil)
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt
Preparation

For the rice and lentils

Strain the lentils and rice and move to a medium-sized pot.

Add the turmeric, salt, and oil. stir and cover with water (to cover the contents by 2 cm / 0.8 inch). Bring to a boil and season with salt to taste (the water should be a bit salty).

Cover the pot and cook over the lowest heat setting for 20 minutes or until the rice and lentils have absorbed all the water. Remove from the heat and rest for 20 minutes.

For the caramelized cauliflower:

Cut the cauliflower into florets, chop the florets to small bits that resemble bread crumbs (using a food processor, a box grater or knife). Move the cauliflower bits to a wide pan, add the salt and oil. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, for 10-14 minutes until golden (not brown).

Empty the pan with caramelized cauliflower (including the oil) to the rice and lentil pot. Gently stir to combine (the rice easily breaks).

The cauli-jadara keeps for 3 days in the fridge and can be frozen for up to a month.

Oz Telem says:

Whenever you prepare a successful dish at home, one that makes you and your loved ones smile, you create joyful moments and pleasant, happy memories. It is a great privilege for me to be the man whose words help forge such moments. I am excited to learn and discover more about the most common ingredients and share that knowledge with you here.
Happy Passover!

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Please welcome to our TAMUZ stage:

KEREN PELES

TAMUZ is proud to present some of the top Israeli musicians in each issue. But the music doesn't end here. Every featured musician will join us for an exclusive event in Hebrew.

תמווז גאים להציג בפניכם בכלי גייזוים מוזיקאי ישראלים מהשוורים הרשמונים. 어ינכם לא מפסייקים לשיר רק במרד coffin - מסכים מוזמנים לאירוע עם הסיר בעברית.
Keren Peles is an Israeli singer-songwriter, poet and pianist, actress and one of the most successful performers in Israel. After graduating from Rimon School of Music she started writing songs for other singers, until 2006 when her debut album *If This Is Life* was released and Keren became a superstar. Since then she released three more albums, written countless songs for other artists, and performed all over Israel and the world.

And she is now coming to the JCC. We are honored to welcome Keren Peles, live at our Goldman Sonnenfeldt Auditorium, for two consecutive nights, in celebration of Yom Haatzmaut.

On Friday, May 6, as part of our fabulous Shabbat Shabbang event, we will host Keren for an intimate conversation “behind the songs.” We’ll hear the stories of some of her most famous hits, talk with her about her career, about stardom, and much more. Tickets will be on sale soon. The following night, Saturday, May 7 at 9 pm, Keren will perform a special Yom Ha’atzmaut concert, live at the JCC.

For tickets, please click [here](#)
IRAD EICHLER

Irad Eichler is the CEO and founder of the Israeli startup Circles, a leading emotional support platform that matches people who are going through similar challenges and places them in small online support groups guided by professional facilitators. Since its founding, Circles has provided over 100,000 hours of support. Irad won the Zero Project prize for impactful social enterprises in 2017 and was named Social Entrepreneur of the Year by the World Economic Forum. In 2005 he founded Shekulo Tov, an organization aimed at helping people with psychiatric disabilities to be included in society by increasing their participation in the labor force. Shekulo Tov has provided support and service to more than 6,000 individuals in rehabilitation.
10 QUESTIONS

What is your favorite part of the day?
The morning. Because after waking up from a night’s rest that’s the moment when I’m empty, and then everything starts and my day starts to fill.

If you could meet with anyone, living or dead, who would it be?
My mother

What has been the most challenging time in your life?
When I lost my mother

What is one of your proudest moments in life?
When I got an award from Bar-Ilan University for social leadership. My mom was dying from cancer and she was there. It was more meaningful for me because I knew she was there and proud of me.

What is your favorite Israeli dish?
Hummus!

What is your favorite location within Israel and why?
The desert, because it’s everything and nothing combined.

Who is an Inspiration for you?
People who take a stand. People who care about things and are willing to pay the price for being vocal.

What advice would you give a young person who wants to change the world?
Change it. Just do it. It’s easier than you think.

What is your biggest fear?
That someone I love will die.

If you could change one thing about Israel what would it be?
To make people more peaceful. I would make every Israeli count to seven before they react to anything.
YOM HASHOAH PROGRAM—DAYS BEYOND TIME: ARTIST MEETS TESTIMONY

THU APR 28 | Virtual

A project in which Israeli artists of the third generation since the Holocaust have been inspired by and incorporated testimonies of Holocaust survivors into their creative process. Meet artists Maya and Gal Rave, creators of Days Beyond Time, and some of the artists and survivors who took part in this emotional and inspirational project.

Noon–1 pm, Free

Click here for more information

YOM HAZIKARON: SHARIM ZIKARON

TUE MAY 3 | In Person

Join the JCC for an evening of songs and remembrance for Yom Hazikaron in memory of Israel’s fallen soldiers, and civilian victims of terrorism. With vocalist Noa Havakook, guitarist Yoav Eshed, and pianist Gadi Lehavi.

The event will be conducted in Hebrew.

7:30–9:30 pm, Free

Click here to register
Mizvak with Yuna Leibzon

Wed May 4 | In Person

Mivzak is The David H Sonabend Center for Israel’s news talk show. (Mivzak is Hebrew for “news flash.”) Our first episode takes place live at the JCC on the evening of Yom Haatzmaut. Join host Yuna Leibzon, chief U.S. correspondent for Channel 12 News, Israel’s most popular TV channel, as she welcomes guests for intimate, in-depth discussions on current events, arts, and culture. For this Yom Haatzmaut program, Yuna will be joined in conversation by special guest Ninet Tayeb, singer/songwriter/actress, and arguably the biggest entertainment name in Israel.

8 pm, $20

Click here to purchase tickets

Shabbat Shabbang

Fri May 6 | In Person

It starts with rituals and appetizers. It continues with a choice of four fascinating dinner programs paired with a dairy meal and seasonal wines. We reconvene for desserts and coffee. Your weekend has not just begun, it’s kicked off—with a shabbang!

Pre-registration is required. For adults and teens age 17 and older. This Shabbat Shabbang is created in celebration of Yom Ha’atzmaut.

7 pm, $18

Click here to purchase tickets
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Rebecca Grossman
Program Director
The David H. Sonabend Center for Israel

Bari Lovi
Major Gifts Officer
The David H. Sonabend Center for Israel

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Amanda Schechter
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