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**Dear Friends,**

Rosh HaShanah has arrived, in the shadow of what often feels like events of apocalyptic proportions. Here in Israel we are about to enter our second lockdown, as infections have grown exponentially in recent weeks, exposing the deep faultlines of Israeli society which Shaharit has dedicated itself to address. Haredim continue to gather in mass as part of a communal lifestyle, bars of Tel Aviv continue to overflow, celebratory Arab weddings attended by thousands continue. School reopenings have been met with a surge in infections.

And thus a lockdown, with business owners threatening to ignore the government's directive, with mutual recriminations between communities, and a general loss of trust in our leaders to lead us through these treacherous times. All with the Prime Minister's impending trial on corruption charges and weekly nationwide protests. As one pundit stated – the first lockdown was like the Six Day War – triumphant with its success, jubilant, and in retrospect full of self-congratulation and hubris. The second lockdown more like the Yom Kippur War – failure resulting from arrogance and conceit.

These are the days of awe, our tradition's penetrating understanding of the human psyche's need for introspection, forgiveness and renewal. We must never forget our lives

are full of blessings lest we take that for granted, which is its own form of arrogance. At Shaharit, we are truly blessed to be able to do the work that we do. To envision the best of Israel, to believe in the capacity of all of us to see the world through other's eyes, and through that, with humility and a sense of common purpose, build our lives together, in spite of the differences. Again and again we have been blessed to see that simple truth come to life across the dizzying spectrum that makes up this beautiful and fraught country.

What follows is a tiny taste of that work. And we are blessed to have all of you as our supporters and friends in this new year, where our days of awe guide us in renewing our energy and our commitment to the work that yet lies ahead.

Shana Tovah,  
Eilon

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### **Shaharit Network Gathers in Knesset to Commemorate Professor Ruth Gavison, Champion of the Common Good**



MK Tehila Friedman, former Senior Shaharit Staff Member, leading a commemoration of Professor Gavison and discussion on the Common Good

In 2013, [Professor Ruth Gavison](#) was tasked with formulating a legal approach balancing Israel's Jewish and Democratic character. Professor Gavison, representing a left-wing

secular background, partnered in this work with Rabbi Yakov Medan – modeling the Common Good approach we advocate for at Shaharit today: with one foot firmly in her own world of meaning, Professor Gavison worked with real openness and empathy towards all parts of Israeli society, winning support from the Israeli left and right, from the religious and the secular, the globalists and the localists.

Professor Gavison passed away in August at the age of 75. May her memory be for a blessing.

MK Tehila Friedman, a long-time senior staff member at Shaharit and most recently the director of our work in the Religious Zionist community, follows closely in Professor Gavison's footsteps. A self-proclaimed Religious Feminist and Kachol Lavan MK, Tehila has [always remained true to her identity and community while working to bridge the divides](#) in Israeli society. Tehila's maiden speech in the Knesset addressed the challenges of Israeli diversity and potential solutions in a powerful way, [going viral with over two million views](#) and demonstrating the real desire in Israeli society for a new kind of Israeli politics.

This week, Tehila, Shaharit, and our partner organization [Pnima](#) held a special event commemorating Gavison and exploring the potential for a common good agenda in Israeli politics. The gathering was attended by Members of Knesset, and included a panel discussion with Professors Nissim Mizrachi, Yifat Biton, and Avraham Diskin, and Sara Alyash. Representing a wide spectrum of perspectives of Israeli politics, there was a deep need expressed to step into other people's shoes and to embrace the complexity of Israeli society.

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**Closing of the Sixth Cohort of the 120 Program for Multicultural National Political Leadership**

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The final meeting of the Sixth Cohort of the 120 Program

120 young leaders from across Israel's political and ethnic spectrum have now completed our 120 training program.

120 young Israeli leaders that embrace the Common Good. 120 young Israeli leaders with unlikely partners and friends: Arabs and Jews, Haredim and LGBTQ, left-wing and right. 120 young Israeli leaders that will bring the Common Good to their political positions, workplaces, communities, and circles of influence.

The sixth cohort was one of the most diverse yet, and faced the challenge of meeting both virtually and in-person throughout the Covid-19 crisis. Their experience was interrupted even with their final seminar, which had to move locations numerous times in the days before the seminar, as new government regulations had us relocating again and again. Life in the time of Corona.

And yet, the bonds formed within the group are powerful. The group devised creative solutions to both make the most of their 120 experience (like organizing small “political dinners” to meet within Health Ministry guidelines) and to respond to the crisis around them (like opening a quarantined homeless shelter in Bat Yam).

Their experience speaks to the truth we know: that individuals with widely differing political views can work together, when there are decent hearts, oriented around the shared common good, and encouraged to feel secure in their identities.

The 120 Program will continue working towards this reality in the coming years. Stay tuned to hear what’s next for this powerful network.

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### **Ethiopian-Israeli Municipal Leaders Find a Home in Shaharit**

Shaharit has become the home for a wide range of Israelis seeking a new kind of Israeli politics – one oriented around finding a shared common future across society, while maintaining the deep diversity that makes Israel special.

Integrationist Haredim, Russian-speaking immigrants, Religious Zionist leaders, Mizrahi-Masortim, Arab Israelis, and others – all trying to balance their traditions, histories, and cultures with their desire to be a part of Israeli society in a deep way – have all found a home in Shaharit.

Now, Ethiopian-Israeli municipal leaders have found a home with us as well.

Shaharit has helped relaunch and train the members of the Forum Tamarag (“elected” in Amharic), a forum of Ethiopian municipality leaders in Israel, which now meets regularly at Shaharit to address some of the most pressing issues for the community. Only this week, the group wrote a joint letter to the Prime Minister asking him to increase the budget for a number of community centers.

Our work with the Forum Tamarag complements our community organizing work with Ethiopian-Israeli communities in the north, which aims to help the Community build the

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skills and networks needed to effectively engage in civic processes, and reach outwards to build coalitions with the society around it.

### Community Organizing Launches in Bedouin Community of Rahat

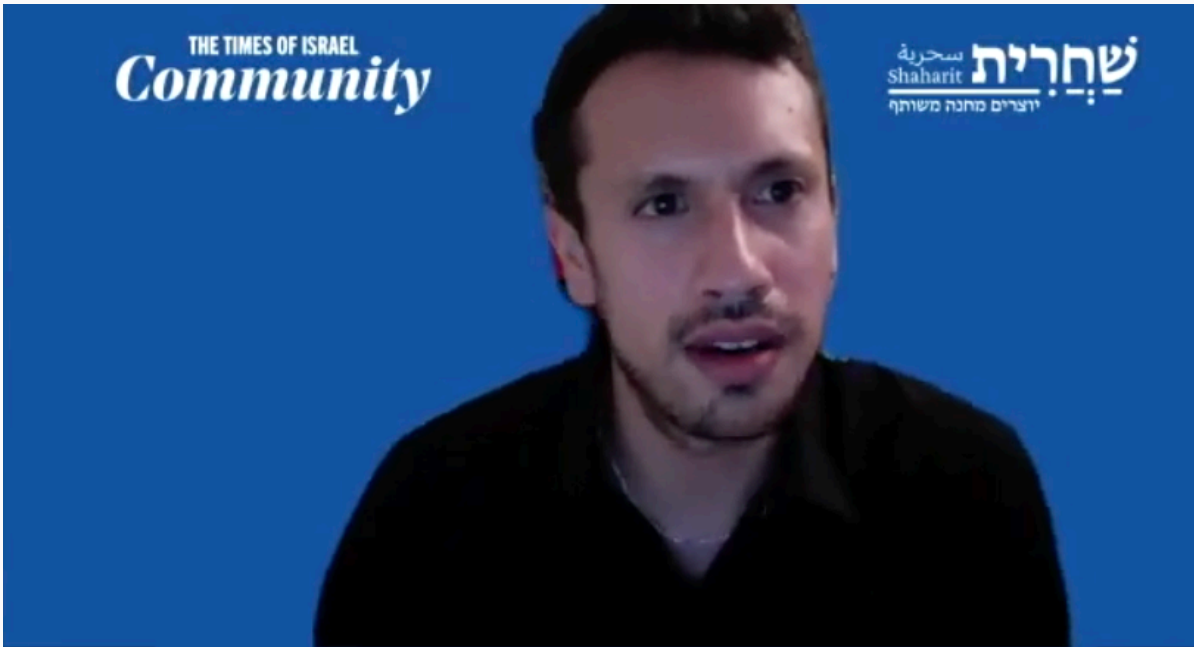


This year we launched a new community organizing training program, with 48 trainees from 12 communities across Israel, all working to build coalitions of diverse neighbors working together towards shared local goals. Our trainee in Rahat, a Bedouin community in the Negev, recently held a large event to build trust and start forming a formal network in the community.

Rahat provides a unique and challenging context for community organizing work. There are deep, historical divisions between different hamulot (clans). While the context is challenging, our organizing methodology was proven in our pilot work, and this first event brings great promise for our organizing efforts there.

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**Shaharit and the Times of Israel:  
Virtual Webinars in English**



We are excited to share three virtual webinars filmed in cooperation with the [Times of Israel](#).

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The webinar series, titled “Responsible for One Another: Understanding Israel’s diverse groups and building bridges between them,” dives into Israel’s deep diversity, engaging activists and leaders in our network to understand some of the histories, narratives, and beliefs of Israel’s diverse identity groups, and what can be done (through the lens of the Common Good) to build an Israeli society with a stronger shared identity and sense of mutual responsibility.

Available webinars:

[The Mizrahi Resurgence: Past, Present, and Future](#)

[Unequal Welcomes: Ethiopian and Russian-Speaking Immigration to Israel](#)

[The Spectrum of Israeli Feminism: Balancing Modernity and Tradition](#)

As a bonus, check out this webinar filmed with the Zionist Federation of Australia, in

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which Shharit Founding Director Dr. Eilon Schwartz explains the [nature and identity of the current social protests in Israel](#).

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