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Happy Hanukkah!



DAYBREAK grantee "Good Eye" offers knitting circles for women and children displaced from their homes since October 7th. © 2023 Doron Oved.

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A message from Eilon

Dear Friends,

On the sixth of October, Israel was being torn apart by a judicial reform that too many felt was more like a dismantling of democracy. To the government and its supporters, it was a demand for the voice of the people to be heard, unfettered by the rulings of Supreme Court judges who were not popularly elected, and whose rulings reflected the interests of the old governing elites. It morphed into a clash on the basic values of the society – on the place of Judaism in the State, on the meaning of liberalism and of democracy, on the social contract between the country and the Haredim. The fabric that weaved Israeli society together was no longer simply fraying; it was being ripped apart at its seams.

All that changed on the seventh of October. Israel is a country of one degree of separation. Every one of us was personally affected by the massacre that began during the early hours of Saturday morning-Simchat Torah. My friend Moshe Ohayon, Board Chair of Shaharit, was murdered along with his son in the first minutes of the monstrous brutality, trying against all odds to protect his family and community in Ofakim. There were 1200 murders that day, 1200 lives each with their own story; each life an entire world.

began to pull back from the precipice, and to discover its greatest resource – each other. Like mushrooms after the rain, initiatives from people who had never been involved in social change in their lives, began to emerge throughout the country, volunteer first responders to the avalanche of civic needs that were born that day. Shaharit, along with the Fund for New Leadership, launched DAYBREAK, an emergency grants program to distribute microgrants to now over 160 recipients, from some 1600 applicants from every corner of Israeli society. Our impressive grantees include professional volunteers counseling woman who were sexually assaulted during the atrocities; a joint Jewish-Arab volunteer donations center in Rahat serving the needs of the underserved Bedouin community; over 100 professional bakers delivering custom birthday cakes to every child who was evacuated from his/her home; and Haredim volunteering to work in agriculture, filling in for the shortage of workers and harvesting the crops that are soon to rot on the vines. Shaharit has had the privilege to play a role in perhaps the most uplifting volunteer mobilization in Israel's history, bringing so much light at a moment that is filled with darkness.

Which Israel will show up in the months and years to come, the Israel of October 6th or the Israel of October 8th?

One of the most moving stories that I have heard from this continuing nightmare was the heroic rescue on October 7th of members of Kibbutz Beeri by two brothers and a nephew who, when hearing the news on that fateful Shabbat-Simchat Torah, drove over from their West Bank religious settlement of Otniel and saved over 100 members of the kibbutz, several from burning buildings, and all while under fire. One of the brothers, Elhanan, was killed in the fighting. (Another brother is in our newest program, Kitov.) Last week the extended Kalmanson family paid a visit to the Dead Sea hotel where Kibbutz Beeri has been temporarily relocated, and met with those they rescued. The spokesperson for the kibbutz wanted to tell the family two things: "In the simplest of terms: Elhanan gave his life so that we could live. Thank you. And we disagree about so many things. But I promise this – we shall rebuild Israeli society, together."

The conflicts that were ripping apart Israel on October 6th were real and have not gone away. But it is our job to let the spirit of the 8th of October define our future: the spirit of the Kalmansons and the kibbutznikim of Beeri; of the Bedouins and the Jews of the Negev – both victims of Hamas's crimes against humanity; the spirit of pioneering Haredim who are searching for a way to take part in the rebuilding of Israel; the spirit of a country that is learning that we need each other. With all the differences, with all the disagreements, with all the conflicting visions of what it means to be Israeli – we share a common home, and we shall build its future, together.

Shaharit stands tall in this moment, continuing its work with increased commitment to that which Moshe, Elhanan, and so many others, gave their last full measure of devotion. It is their legacy and our duty and privilege. We cannot fail in the task at hand.

May the light of Chanukah expel the darkness of these perilous days,
Eilon



Immediately following October 7th, Shaharit and the Fund for New Leadership launched DAYBREAK, in memory of Shaharit Board Chair Moshe Ohayon z"l, who was killed in the massacre. DAYBREAK emergency grants are sustaining informal initiatives all over Israel and have touched the lives of hundreds of thousands. We support initiatives renovating homes of wounded soldiers. Those that provide comfort and joy to southern evacuees. Others which support newly bereaved families. And dozens more. No other emergency program is doing as much as we are to sustain Israel's Homefront and strengthen the nation's resilience.

Donate to DAYBREAK



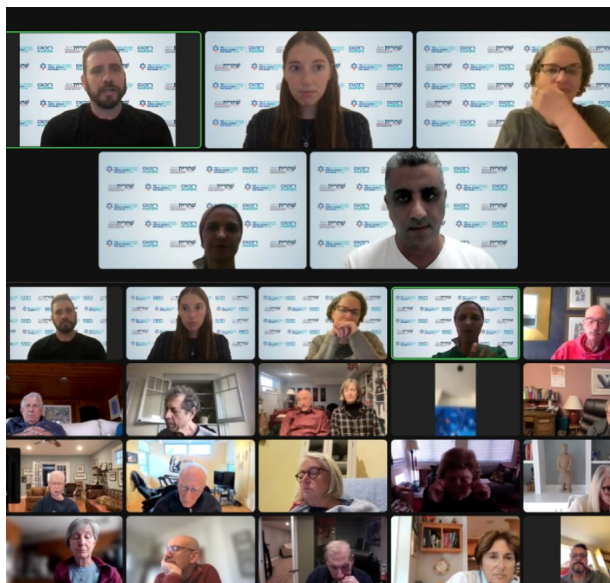
KiToV Launched!

We are incredibly excited about launching our inaugural Kitov cohort. Now more than ever it is vital to have a group of leaders from all across Israel's identity spectrum come together to focus on crossing divides and engaging each other. Throughout the year the group will work to deepen the idea of the common good as well as explore what living well together actually means. These leaders will help us all envision a shared future.



Mansour Abbas Joins the Shahrar-Van Leer Forum

In the latest installment of the forum we had the privilege of hosting Member of Knesset Mansour Abbas. Abbas heads the Islamic Ra'am party in the Knesset and was the first ever Arab party to join a governing coalition in the previous government. MK Abbas gave us invaluable insights on the current crisis as well as how he envisions a reconciliation process for the "day after."



Embracing from Afar: Solidarity Salons with Israel

Shahrar has been organizing moving and emotional panels between Israelis and communities abroad. This event makes space for Israelis and North Americans to

experience since October 7th providing a window into the Israeli experience for those not in the country. These events truly create a beautiful sense of solidarity that is appreciated by both the panelists and the audience members. If you're interested in bringing this panel to your community, email Alison Kanefsky at alison@shaharit.org.il.

Shaharit in the media

Heli Tabibi Bareket celebrated Eid al-Banat (Jewish Women's Day) with a powerful piece in the Jerusalem Post about Jewish heroines of past and present and the need for society to heed women's voices. Check it out [here](#).

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