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All 20 Living Hostages Back in Israel, 2 Years after Hamas' Oct. 7 Attack



Thousands gather at Hostage Square to celebrate the return of the hostages, October 13, 2025. Credit: Miriam Alster/Flash90

By Philissa Cramer

October 13, 2025 (JTA) — All 20 of the Israeli hostages still alive two years after being taken hostage by Hamas have returned to Israel, following an emotional morning that commanded the attention of Jews around the world who had lobbied for their release.

Unlike in past hostage releases, Hamas did not stage release "ceremonies," a condition of the deal the group

in charge of Gaza made in striking a U.S.-brokered ceasefire deal the week prior. But in another departure, the group provided phones for hostages waiting for Red Cross vehicles to use to call their families, creating jarring scenes of joyful conversations taking place with masked terrorists visible on screen.

The family of Bar Kupershtein re-

leased a video of him telling his ecstatic mother, "It's OK, Mom. Don't worry."

Einav Zangauker, the mother of Matan Angrest, was filmed telling him, "The war is over. You're all coming home. You are my world. I love you."

Another photo, released by Israel, showed Gali and Ziv Berman, twins abducted from Kibbutz Kfar Aza, reuniting after being held separately in captivity.

Alon Ohel, who was thought to have suffered injuries to his eyes, could be seen putting on sunglasses provided to him by the Israeli soldiers tasked with bringing him home.

And Lishay Miran-Lavi, waiting for husband Omri Miran after speaking to him by FaceTime, called their two young daughters to tell them, "Daddy's coming home." Soon, she and her husband were reunited in person.

The hostages appeared pale and gaunt but were walking on their own and in some cases appeared to be in improved condition compared to past footage released by Hamas.

The videos and photographs elicited joyous cheers from the tens of thousands of people who gathered in Hos-

tages Square in Tel Aviv, where the site of pained prayer was transformed into a central address for jubilation. The massive "Bring Them Home" letters that had loomed over the square for most of the last two years were revised last Sunday night to say, "Welcome Back Home."

Another crowd convened at Reim, the kibbutz near the Gaza border where many of the hostages were abducted during the Nova music festival on Oct. 7, 2023, and which would mark their first stop in Israel en route to being reunited with their families. The gathering marked Hoshana Rabbah, the ritual to mark the end of Sukkot. Monday night marked the beginning of Simchat Torah, the Jewish holiday on which Hamas staged its attack and took roughly 250 hostages.

Of them, 37 who were killed on Oct. 7 or in captivity now remain in Gaza, along with the body of a soldier kidnapped in 2014. Under the terms of the deal, Hamas must release their bodies, too, but the group says it has not yet been able to locate all of them. Those that have been located were released to Israel on Monday afternoon. **HW**

Focus on Peace Process Turning to Demilitarizing Gaza, Trump Admin Officials Say

By Mike Wagenheim

(JNS) — A senior Trump administration adviser told reporters last Wednesday that efforts are underway to demilitarize Gaza.

"We're defining a path that makes everyone feel safe," the adviser, who declined to be named, told reporters. "It's not realistic to expect people to just drop arms."

"The dynamic is complex, but the sentiment from Arab mediators and from Hamas is to keep working together toward a solution," the adviser said.

The adviser and another senior U.S. adviser, who also spoke to reporters anonymously, told reporters that phase one of the Israel-Hamas war, which focused on deconfliction, entry of aid and returning bodies of hostages to Israel, has been a success.

One of the advisers refuted media reports that Israel had cut the amount of aid due to enter the Strip.

"We've had positive conversations with the United Nations to ensure aid effectively reaches people in Gaza," the adviser said. "There have been no cuts so far and no intention to cut as long as the deal holds."

An international stabilization force, which U.S. President Donald Trump outlined in his 20-point peace plan, "is starting to be constructed," one of the advisers said.

Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Qatar and Azerbaijan have expressed interest in taking part in the multinational force to assume security control in Gaza during a transitional period.

A technocratic Palestinian-led transitional government, for which Trump's plan also called, is starting to take shape.

"Many people are reaching out. We're moving deliberately," one of the U.S. advisers told reporters. "Hamas is weaker than ever. People see a different future and have the courage to reach out."

One of the advisers also said that Hamas, which Trump's plan gave explicit leeway to police Gaza for a limited time, should stop extrajudicial killings in the streets.

"We're working with mediators to send the message that should stop," the adviser said. "We're also working with Israel to create space in a safe zone behind the yellow line where threatened

people can go."

"Israel is committed to creating safety for Gazans, who want to live in peace and renounce Hamas," one of the advisers said. "Israel met this idea with enthusiasm after two years of war. They want to protect civilians seeking a different path."

According to the advisers, local developers and contractors are already being engaged to be part of rebuilding Gaza.

"The goal is to move quickly to create jobs, housing and services," one of the advisers said. "There is also a major line of effort on demolition and unexploded ordnance clearance, which also affects body recovery."

The other adviser said that Gaza has been "pulverized."

"We have various intelligence on locations of deaths and injuries. With greater control of areas, we can do more, but we need more resources," the adviser said. (Per the adviser, multiple countries, including Turkey, have offered to send experienced body-recovery teams.)

One of the advisers said conversations with mediators "indicate" Hamas's

"It's not realistic to expect people to just drop arms," a senior U.S. adviser told reporters.

"continued intent to honor the deal."

"There was disappointment when only four bodies were returned" on the first night of the release of hostages, one of the advisers said. "But more followed in the next days, as we provided intelligence. They are maneuvering to do their best."

One of the advisers said the administration is urging Israel to share its intelligence about the bodies of the remaining hostages.

"We're using every lever to maximize results and continue making progress," one of the advisers said.

"We will not stop until everyone comes home," the other said. **HW**

There's More Reason than Ever to Open a Donor-Advised Fund with the Jewish Foundation of Memphis!



New fundholders can receive a grant of up to \$1,000 to give away to favorite Memphis Jewish organizations, like the Memphis Jewish Community Center.

By Laura Linder, CEO and President, Jewish Community Partners

In the heart of Memphis, a spirit of generosity and community thrives, and at the Jewish Foundation of Memphis, we're dedicated to helping you channel that spirit into powerful action. Now is the perfect time to amplify your charitable giving through one of the most flexible and tax-efficient tools available: a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF).

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alom Synagogue, Bornblum Jewish Community School, Margolin Hebrew Academy, Memphis Jewish Community Center, Temple Israel and Wendy and the Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service.

Local philanthropists David and Michelle Katz, who recently opened a Jewish Foundation of Memphis DAF, said the experience was smooth and seamless.

"The Foundation team was extremely helpful throughout the process. We spoke to Sheri a few times and she explained the process very well and made it extremely easy," Michelle said.

David said they decided to open a DAF because "we wanted to support the Jewish Foundation's efforts, and it certainly helped with tax advantages in the current year."

David and Michelle have already put their DAF to work, supporting a diverse range of causes: "We recommended grants to local Jewish organizations that we are closely involved with, including the Margolin Hebrew Academy, Young Israel, and Jewish Federation. We also used it for a non-local organization that David is involved with that helps Jewish small business owners with mentoring," they explained.

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10/23/2025



Memphis Candlelighting Time

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Havdalah, Sat. Oct. 25, 2025 / 3 Cheshvan, 5786 6:50 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Noach

cation, choose a name for your fund, and list its advisors. Make a tax-deductible donation with a minimum of \$5,000 to the Foundation to establish your fund. You can begin recommending grants right away!

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The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Lunch is Monday—Friday at 11:30 a.m. All programs start at 12:15 p.m.
Monthly Luncheon is at noon.

Monday, October 27

Speaker: Rabbi Yosef Braha

Ask the Rabbi

Rabbi Braha is Rosh Kollel and director of operations of the Memphis Kollel. His talks are always one of the highlights for the speaker series. Bring all your Jewish questions and queries that you have been wondering about, but maybe, were afraid to ask. No question is too tough! With the Jewish High Holy Days just a few weeks ago, this is a perfect time to get answers to many of the questions you have been thinking about! Rabbi Braha always has a nice and sometimes humorous answer. Have a nice lunch and an informative afternoon.

Wednesday, October 29

Speaker: Kevin Payne with Humana
Topic: Medicare 101

Kevin always brings an entertaining talk that everyone really enjoys. Medicare has many changes for next year. Come learn about some of these changes and have some of your questions answered. He has a refreshing way of teaching us things we need to know and usually has handouts to emphasize his talks. Please do not wait till next year and get surprises with some of your Medicare billing! Reservations are needed for the lunch only.

Monday, November 3

Speaker: Rabbi Cantor David Julian

Topic: Jews and Thankfulness

Rabbi Cantor David Julian with Or Chadash Synagogue will offer an uplifting talk – the type of message we need to hear in these times. He will also leave time for a Q&A. Come have a nice kosher lunch and hear this interesting talk. Reservations are only required for the lunch.

Wednesday, November 5

Team Trivial Pursuit

The seniors received a gift of a new set of Trivial Pursuit questions, which were used in the last Trivial Pursuit session. It led to a lively back and forth team effort that saw the lead go back and forth until one of the teams finally pulled out a win. It was a lot of fun with some of the quieter team members having the right answer. Prizes were given out to both teams. Reservations are needed for the lunch.

Please join us Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch from the kitchens at Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. The cost is only \$2 for seniors. Reservations are required the day before by 1 p.m. by contacting Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220 or stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org or by calling the front desk at 901-761-0810. Steve works Monday through Thursday 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. **HW**

IDF Releases New Photo of Sinwar's Body on Anniversary of Hamas Leader's Elimination

(JNS) – The Israel Defense Forces released a never-before-seen picture last Thursday showing the slain body of Yahya Sinwar, marking one year since IDF soldiers killed the Hamas terrorist mastermind in the Gaza Strip.

The photo shows former IDF Southern Command chief Maj. Gen. Yaron Finkelman, former Operations Directorate chief Maj. Gen. Oded Basiuk and Gaza Division chief Brig. Gen. Barak Hiram standing near Sinwar's body on Oct. 17, 2024, a day after he had been killed in southern Gaza.

The image was made public as part of a set of iconic photos taken by IDF photographers during the war, which will be displayed as part of an exhibition at the Yitzhak Rabin Center in Tel Aviv starting on Sunday.

"A year since humanity was freed from the master of the flood of evil," tweeted Avichay Adraee, head of the Arab Media Branch in the IDF Spokesperson's Unit.

"Goodness cannot be defeated – and justice, no matter how delayed, will prevail. To hell, and what a miserable fate awaits you, Sinwar," added the military spokesman.

Sinwar was the mastermind behind the terrorist attacks in Israel's south on Oct. 7, 2023, during which around 1,200 people, primarily civilians, were murdered; thousands were wounded; and

251 were kidnapped.

Israel's Foreign Ministry posted on X last Sunday a handwritten letter penned by Sinwar revealing the Oct. 7 massacre "wasn't chaos, but choreography."

"Terrorists were ordered to film the slaughter of civilians, soldiers and families – not for documentation, but as a psychological weapon to terrorize Israelis and inspire extremists," the ministry stated.

"This wasn't a 'spontaneous uprising.' It was a scripted campaign for the destruction of Israel – planned, rehearsed and executed," the MFA said.

On Oct. 11, The New York Times published further details about the memo, which was found by a special unit of the IDF in May 2025.

The unit found the six-page memo on a computer in a tunnel complex used by Mohammed Sinwar, the brother of Yahya, who briefly headed Hamas after his brother's death before being killed in October 2024.

Sinwar's document called for Hamas terrorists to target IDF soldiers and civilian communities, as well as to broadcast the violent acts to spread fear among Israelis and destabilize the country, the Times reported.

The Hamas memo ordered Palestinian gunmen to enter civilian towns in Israel and set them on fire "with gasoline or diesel from a tanker."

It sought maximum shock value, urging fighters to "stomp on the heads of soldiers." It also ordered "opening fire on soldiers at point-blank range, slaughtering some of them with knives, blowing up tanks."

The anniversary of Sinwar's killing last Thursday coincided with Israel's national day of mourning for the military and civilian victims of Oct. 7.

The Hamas-led massacre was "monstrous in every sense of the word," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared in remarks at a state memorial ceremony for fallen IDF soldiers, calling the Oct. 7 attacks a "merciless killing of infants, children, adults, the elderly."

The leader of the Jewish state added that "if those killers could have done it, they would have slaughtered each and every one of us."

The IDF's official death toll since the Oct. 7 attacks stood last Thursday afternoon at 916, while hundreds more Israeli civilians were murdered in the massacre and subsequent attacks. **HW**

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A look back on our history in photos

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Answer the Call Federation's Super Sunday Kick-Off in the JCC lobby ~ 1991



Avron, Wendy, Hal and Rick Fogelman at a major donor dinner with keynote speaker former Secretary of State and General Alexander Haig at The Peabody Hotel ~ January 1987

Holocaust Museum Director Rebukes Gazans Identifying as 'Holocaust Survivors'



Interior of a train boxcar used by Nazi Germany to transport Jews during the Holocaust, at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Credit: Beth Jusino via Flickr.

By Aaron Bandler

(JNS) – Those who say that Gazans are “holocaust survivors,” having endured Israel’s defensive war against the Hamas terror organization, are to be “widely condemned,” according to Sara Bloomfield, director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

“Falsely comparing the Holocaust to Israel’s response to Hamas’s terrorist attack is an outrageous weaponization of the genocide of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, who systematically murdered six million Jews,” Bloomfield told JNS. “It’s antisemitic, inaccurate, highly offensive and must be widely condemned.”

One social media account has received 3.2 million views for a post claiming to be a “holocaust survivor” of war in Gaza. Another post from a “survivor of the Gaza holocaust” garnered 525,000 views, and a post from an artist wearing a keffiyeh, referring to “my survival from this holocaust,” received 40,000 views.

Former MSNBC host Mehdi Hasan, who created a media company called Zeteo, wrote in a since-deleted social media post that “one of the ways in which the Gaza genocide is worse than a lot of previous genocides – Rwanda, even the Holocaust – is that you didn’t have Hutus or Nazis mocking the genocide after it was over. They were shunned, deradicalized, prosecuted.”

Deborah Camiel, senior vice president of communications at the Simon Wiesenthal Center, told JNS that Hasan “based his outrageous comment comparing the Oct. 7 war to the Holocaust on the canard that Israel’s military response to Hamas atrocities was a genocide.”

That claim is a “tired inversion widely used by antisemites, who try at every opportunity, no matter how inexact or intellectually lazy the comparison is, to portray Jews as Nazis,” Camiel said. “Israel’s war of self-defense was not against the Palestinian people but the vicious terrorist group Hamas.”

“As Hasan well knows, Hamas, itself a group with a genocidal charter, embeds itself among Palestinian civilians, in private homes, mosques, schools and hospitals, purposefully exposing them to terrible harm,” the Wiesenthal Center spokeswoman told JNS. “It is clear today that most of the world agrees that it is this maniacal jihadist group that should be shunned, eradicated and prosecuted.”

Hasan stated that he deleted the post

since he “was trying, clumsily, to make the point that Holocaust deniers are (rightly) condemned and ostracized in the West while Gaza genocide deniers remain leading members of our political and media establishments.”

“There was no offense meant to the Jewish community, and I abhor and condemn all genocides,” he stated.

That post drew a fresh round of criticism. “Falsely portraying what happened in Gaza as a ‘genocide’ is an attempt to obscure the inability of Muslim-Arab elites to operate in a world of cause and effect,” stated Dexter Van Zile, of the Middle East Forum.

Palestinians “start wars they can’t win and blame their enemies for the consequences,” Van Zile said. “Your false narrative of Israel perpetrating a genocide consigns another generation of young people to another round of suffering. Eventually, the genocide narrative will be discredited. It will happen when a non-Jewish democracy fights a war for its survival.” [HW](#)

Pro-Hamas Hackers Disrupt North American Airports

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – A group calling itself “Turkish hacker Cyber Islam” hacked into terminal communication systems at multiple North American airports last Tuesday, using them to broadcast pro-Hamas propaganda.

The cyber attacks reportedly took place at Harrisburg International Airport in Pennsylvania, Kelowna International Airport and Victoria International Airport in the Canadian province of British Columbia and at Windsor International Airport in Ontario.

Video documentation posted by passengers included a recorded message on the public address system with a female voice saying “Free, free Palestine” and cursing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Donald Trump.

Flight information screens displayed pictures of Hamas terrorists killed by Israel, including Mohammed Deif, Abu Obeida, Ismail Haniyah and Yahya Sinwar, among other images, along with the message: “ISRAEL LOST

THE WAR, HAMAS WON THE WAR HONORABLY” and “You are a pig, Donald Trump.” A grotesque caricature of Netanyahu was displayed along with a message cursing the Israeli leader.

CTV News reported that two flights – one inbound and one outbound – were delayed at Kelowna. Fox News reported that at Delta flight boarding at Harrisburg at the time of the incident was searched out of an abundance of caution.

Canadian and American authorities are investigating the incidents, which the airports said did not contain any threats directed at airlines, passengers or employees.

“We have a cybersecurity response plan. And so, we activated that yesterday evening. We were able to de-couple, disconnect, those messages very, very quickly,” CTV News quoted Kelowna airport CEO Sam Samaddar as saying. “And then, of course, lead through an investigation in terms of what had happened. And so, we are focused on that.” [HW](#)

IDF Troops Kill Grenade-Wielding Terrorist in Samaria

(JNS) – A Palestinian terrorist last Friday threw a grenade at Israel Defense Forces troops operating near Jenin in northern Samaria.

The soldiers returned fire, killing the attacker, the military said.

No injuries were reported among Israeli forces.

Last Wednesday, the IDF and Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) announced

that they had thwarted an Iranian weapons-smuggling operation aimed at supplying terrorists in Judea and Samaria.

“This shipment, like its predecessors, is part of an ongoing Iranian effort to destabilize security in the region by arming terror cells, whose goal is to carry out attacks against Israelis and IDF forces,” according to the joint statement. [HW](#)

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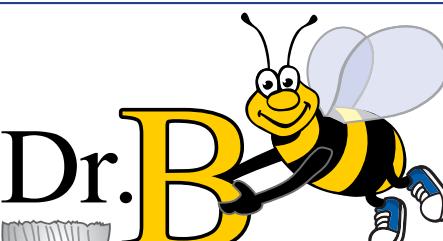
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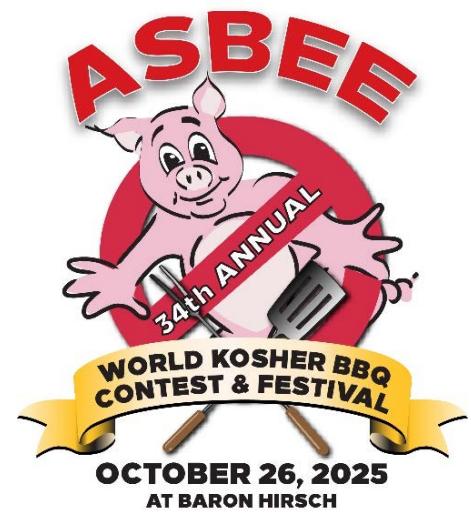
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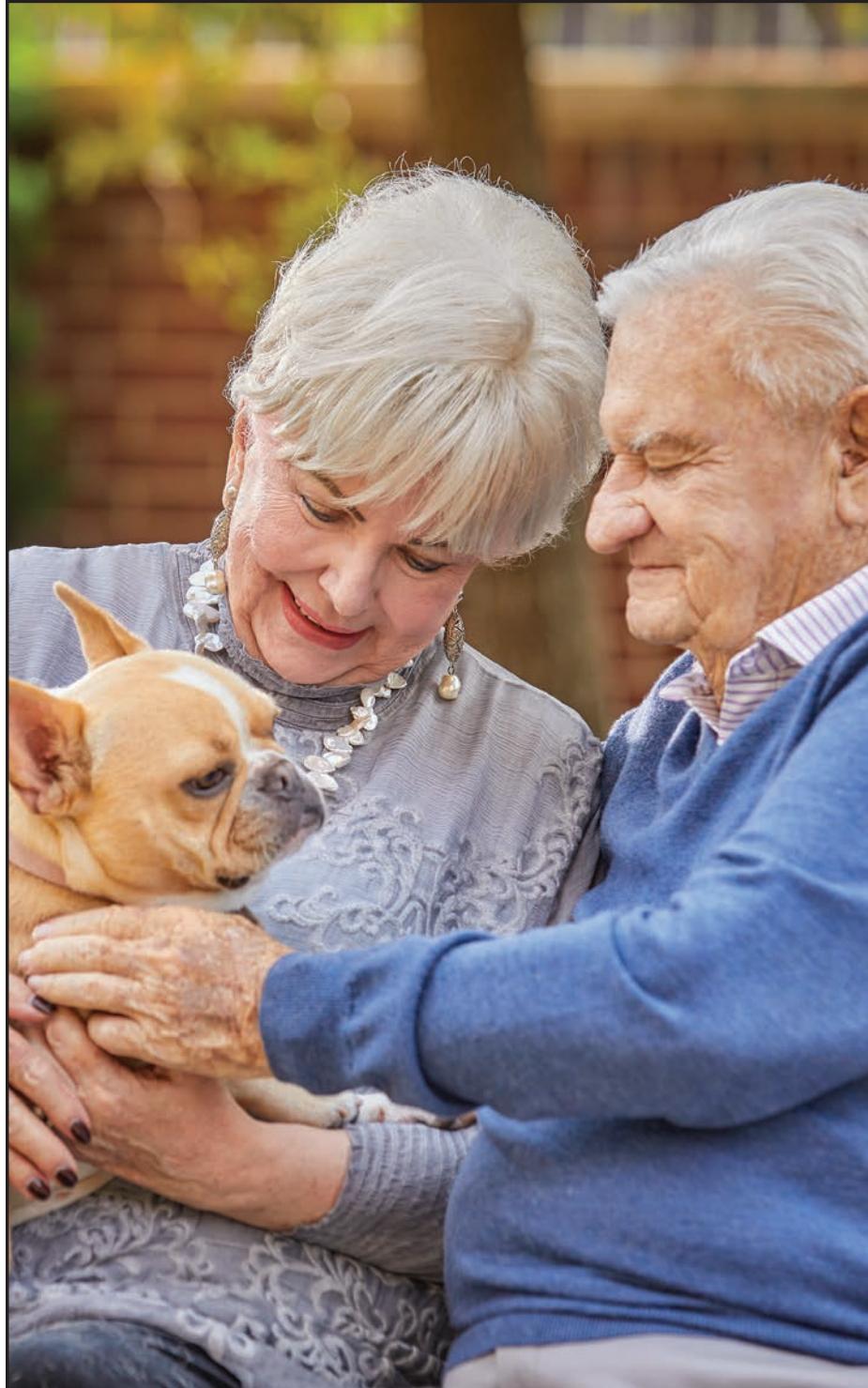
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Active Funds vs. Passive Funds. Which is Better?

Provided by Mike Stein, Managing Director - Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors

Questions for Mike? You can reach him at 901.761.8151 or Michael.Stein@WellsFargoAdvisors.com • fa.wellsfargoadvisors.com/michael-stein

Are active funds better than passive funds or vice versa? The debate rages on. To help determine which may be better for your portfolio, it helps to understand how they differ.

Active investing involves the skills of an investment manager who seeks to generate greater returns than a market benchmark or index and may pursue other goals, such as reducing risk and enhancing income. Active investing includes substantial research and, possibly, a fair amount of trading, and the manager generally passes these expenses on to the investor.

A passive manager's investment strategy, on the other hand, is designed to track the performance of an index, an asset class, or market segment (benchmark) and achieve returns that closely correspond to the returns of that benchmark. The goal of this type of investing might be, for example, to track the performance of the S&P 500 Index, which means owning a basket of stocks that mirrors the index's composition. Once the basket's contents are determined, the manager generally steps back and lets market forces do what they will.

With this type of investing, the manager will not sell securities to try to take advantage of changing market conditions and may have less flexibility to react to price declines in the securities but will continue to hold the same securities as the benchmark it is designed to track.

The expenses for a passively managed fund, such as many exchange-traded funds (ETFs), are usually low, making it comparatively inexpensive for investors

to own. It is important to note that although these funds trade relatively infrequently, keeping administrative expenses relatively low, this means the fund's performance probably will not match the benchmark's performance exactly.

Investors may find these low expenses attractive, but actively managed funds could have an advantage during periods of market volatility. While a passive manager's hands are essentially tied during these times, an active manager is able to make adjustments to the portfolio in an attempt to improve its performance. Although there's no guarantee these efforts will prove successful, the active manager – unlike the passive manager – at least has room to maneuver.

Wide range of alternatives

Because there are literally thousands of funds on the market, deciding on active investing opens the door to a broad range of additional choices.

There are funds concentrated on a specific level of capitalization, or cap – a term used to describe a company's size. It's determined simply by multiplying a company's stock price by the number of shares in the market. In addition to large-cap, such as those in the S&P 500, there are also mid-cap and small-cap companies.

In addition, there are funds focused on different investing styles. Growth funds invest in companies that appear poised to grow faster than their market sector or the market in general, although growth may not be realized. Value funds, on the other hand, look for companies that investors appear to be over-

Active vs. passive snapshot

Active	Passive
• Ongoing research and frequent trading	• No ongoing research and little, if any, trading
• Relatively high expenses	• Relatively low expenses
• May focus on, for example:	• Generally more tax efficient
◦ Large-, mid-, or small-capitalization companies	• May seek to track the performance of an index, such as the S&P 500
◦ Value vs. growth	
◦ Dividend-paying (income) companies	

looking for one reason or another and show promise for a comeback, but there is no guarantee the overall market will recognize such value.

Some funds look to generate income by investing in companies that pay dividends. Investors can receive that income as cash or reinvest it in additional fund shares. However, keep in mind that reinvested income generally is taxable in the year it's paid unless it's held in a tax-advantaged account, such as an IRA.

Remember to diversify

The debate over active vs. passive is somewhat pointless because you don't have to choose between the two. In addition to spreading your money across a variety of different asset classes (stocks, bonds, and cash), market capitalizations (large, medium, and small), and investing styles (growth and value), you can also diversify by including both passive and active investments in your portfolio. For help with building a portfolio designed to help you reach your goals, consider turning to a professional financial advisor.

Mutual funds and exchange-traded funds are subject to risks of the underlying investments in the fund. Investment returns may fluctuate and are subject to market volatility, so that an investor's shares, when redeemed

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Asset allocation and diversification are investment methods used to help manage risk. They do not guarantee investment returns or eliminate risk of loss including in a declining market.

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ISRAEL INSIGHTS ~ A Momentous Day

By Howard Weisband

I am writing on a momentous day, Erev Simchat Torah 5786, 2025, two years following that tragic day on Simchat Torah 5784, 2023, as all of our living hostages have returned Home, as President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu met together with the hostage families in Jerusalem, and as the President addresses the Knesset.

Israel is celebrating.

My last column asked the question regarding President Trump's 20 point plan, blueprint or pipe dream. The answer is being clarified in real time. We may be witnessing a blueprint for peace in the Middle East... security and peace!

We thought and hoped, even prayed, in 1993 that the Oslo Accords would bring peace. But it brought neither security nor peace. The problem then was that those accords were between only Israel and the PLO. It failed. The latter as an organization nor its then leader was a peacemaker.

As important a day today is, as momentous as it is, it hopefully will be overshadowed later today and tomorrow when President Trump travels to Egypt, to Sharm El Sheikh on the Red Sea, at the bottom of the Sinai Peninsula.

There the President has convened and will meet with a large group of Arab and Muslim leaders in the Middle East and beyond, and European leadership. Actually, the President appears to have made a wise decision to work directly with the President of Egypt, the largest Arab country, and alongside Jordan as the only two Arab countries who maintain peace treaties with Israel. It was Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi who issued the invitation to some 20 countries, those from the Middle East and Europe.

Seth Frantzman in the Jerusalem Post on October 8 quoted Al-Arabiya (Arab media) that Sisi said "Negotiations are currently underway in Sharm el-Sheikh

to end the war, and our hearts are with these negotiations. I note with great appreciation and respect President Trump's genuine desire to end the war during the current round of negotiations." He added, "The news I've received from the Sharm el-Sheikh meetings is encouraging, and we hope to seize the opportunity and ensure that the war ends in the current round of negotiations."

It appears, hopefully, that the Abraham Accords (maybe now to be called the Avraham Accords) will be expanding, in fact blossoming into an entity that will far exceed both the expectations and the reality of the Oslo Accords. Just as Hamas was convinced by Israel's military achievements and an Arab and Middle East coalition that influenced Hamas to release all hostages, living and deceased (something few of us, myself included, did not think would happen peacefully), they may now be convinced to disarm and refrain from

governance in the Gaza Strip.

Gaza then can be rebuilt, the PA can be radically reformed, or a new governing entity created among the Palestinians in order to lead Palestinian society in peace for the betterment of its people and society, who then will be able to live side by side in peace with Israel.

May Simchat Torah 5786, bring true simcha, joy, security and peace, to Israel and Am Yisrael, the Jewish People, and all good peoples throughout the Middle East and the world.

Howard Weisband served as Assistant Executive Director (1975-77) and Executive Director (1977-84) of the Memphis Jewish Federation. Following Aliyah with his family in 1986, he served as Secretary General of the Jewish Agency for Israel through 1997, and then in other senior professional positions in Israel. Now retired, he and Kayla live in Jerusalem. He can be reached at hweisband@gmail.com HW

OBITUARIES



Joyce Spivak Lansky

Joyce Spivak Lansky, 97, passed away peacefully at her home surrounded by her family on October 11, 2025. She was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother whose love, strength and grace kept her family closely connected through the years.

Born on September 6, 1928, in Philadelphia, Pa., Joyce later moved to Louisville, Ky., where she spent her childhood with her parents, Lillian and Max Spivak, her brother, Albert, and her sister, Minerva, all of blessed memory.

Joyce devoted much of her life to working alongside her husband, Bernard, during the early years of Lansky Bros., helping to grow the family business that became a Memphis landmark. She was meticulous and organized, managing both family finances and business accounts with grace and

precision. In the 1980s, she shared her creativity through her stationery shop, Le Papier Boutique, where she designed elegant custom invitations and stationery.

An active and respected member of the Memphis community, Joyce served as past president of the B'nai B'rith Women's Organization, served on the board of directors of the Better Business Bureau, and proudly served as a Notary Public.

Above all, Joyce's greatest joy was her family. She was the beloved matriarch who kept everyone together, ensuring that family traditions, gatherings and celebrations continued with love and care. Joyce was happily married to Bernard (of blessed memory) for 64 years. She is survived by her son, Hal Lansky (Geri); daughter Anise Belz (Ron); five granddaughters, Lia Lansky, Julie Lansky (Tobey Hubbard), Melisa Lansky Weisman (Steve), Rachel Belz and Rebecca Belz (Sam Fargotstein); and six great-grandchildren, Ethan Pulver, Max and Dahlia Weisman, Harper Lansky Hubbard and Brianna and Gemma Belz Fargotstein.

Joyce's legacy lives on in the family she cherished and the community she helped shape. She will be remembered for her warmth, elegance, devotion and the enduring love she shared with all who knew her.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorial contributions be directed to the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab or the charity of your choice. 36 Bazeberry Rd., Cordova, TN, 38018 www.memphisjewishhome.org HW

Joel Allen Reisman

Joel Allen Reisman, age 84, passed away peacefully on October 1, 2025.

Born in St. Louis on June 24, 1941, Joel moved with his parents to Hughes, Ark., at the age of two, soon to enjoy a country boyhood spent riding bikes and enjoying small-town freedom. His family (which grew in time to include brothers Charlie, Wayne and Robb) moved to Memphis when he was 12. Joel quickly adjusted to life in the city, joining Temple Israel and AZA fraternity, and making life-long friends. He graduated from Central High School in 1959, then was off to the University of Tennessee Knoxville. His sights already set on becoming a psychiatrist, he returned to Memphis and graduated from UT Medical School in 1964.

Joel proudly served in the U.S. Navy from 1965 to 1974, including a tour as medical officer for a destroyer division during the Vietnam conflict. He completed a residency in psychiatry at University of Oregon Medical School. After his training, Joel once again returned to Memphis, this time to stay.

In addition to establishing a busy private practice, he served as the first medical director at Lakeside Hospital, helped create an innovative mental health crisis stabilization unit for Memphis and Shelby County, and led a hospital-based eating disorders unit. Joel later became a well-respected forensic psychiatrist, testifying in many federal and state cases in the Mid-South for over 30 years. Joel was honored to be a Fellow of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law. Deeply committed to educating subsequent generations of psychiatrists,

he served as a volunteer Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry, UTCHS. And Joel loved volunteering at the Church Health Center, seeing patients and overseeing other mental health professionals, which he did for over a decade.

Beyond his professional achievements, Joel was an avid tennis player and a lifelong lover of travel and history. He took up adult soccer at 40 and somehow survived that without major injury. He also played a mean game of spoons. Even as his health declined, Joel enjoyed going to the movies and sitting at Shelby Farms looking out at the lake, reading. Known for his dry wit, a favorite anecdote concerned the day he and Anne selected plots at Elmwood Cemetery. Upon being told the plots were reasonably priced but rather near the railroad tracks, Joel responded "I don't think the noise is going to bother me."

Joel is survived by his loving wife, Anne Mathes; his children, Mark Lan Reisman (Sherry), Nicole Joell Reisman and Charles Rashad Reisman (Angel); three grandsons, his brother, Robb Reisman (Jan); his cousin, Laurel Reisman, numerous other cousins, nieces and nephews, and lifelong friend Gordon Gruen. He was preceded in death by his parents, Francis Land and Mervin Reisman, his brothers, Wayne and Charlie, and by his former wife and mother to Mark and Nicole, Cecile Weiss Reisman.

A private burial was held at Elmwood Cemetery on October 4, 2025.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in Joel's memory to the Church Health Center or the Memphis & Shelby County Humane Society. HW

Who Will Seth Rogen and Kate Berlant Play in 'Nobody Wants This' Season Two?



Credit: (L) John Shearer/WireImage; Credit: (R) Gareth Cattermole/Getty Images for IMDb

By Evelyn Frick

This originally appeared in HeyAlma, reprinted with permission.

New "Nobody Wants This" season two guest stars just dropped!

Variety reported that Jewish actors Seth Rogen and Kate Berlant will appear in episodes of "Nobody Wants This" in season two. Rogen and Berlant join Leighton Meester, Arian Moayed, Alex Karpovsky and Miles Fowler as guest stars this season. More Jews acting in "Nobody Wants This"? Baruch Hashem!

As of yet, it's unclear what roles "The Studio" Emmy winner and "A League of Their Own" actress will play in the Hot Rabbi Netflix show. At the Prime-

The Jewish actors join Leighton Meester, Arian Moayed, Alex Karpovsky and Miles Fowler as guest stars in the Netflix show.

time Emmy Awards however, Variety's Marc Malkin happened to interview Seth Rogen and Adam Brody together. He asked Rogen if he would ever play a rabbi on "Nobody Wants This."

"Maybe," Rogen laughed. "Not to say I'm typecast, but if the shoe fits." HW



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30 Years, 30 Moments

A Look Back at the Legacy of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis in Photos

In honor of the 30-year anniversary of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis, we are showcasing the Foundation's history and impact through a content series across multiple platforms, including a photo series highlighting key moments in the Foundation's history.

2015: The Jewish Foundation of Memphis created an endowment for teenage grantmaking. Through the formation of a teen council, comprised of B'nai Tzedek members, the teens review grant proposals from local Jewish organizations and award between \$10,000-\$15,000 annually. Pictured is the 2025 teen grant council at their annual award event. Since its founding, the teen council has granted more than \$100,000.



In Captivity, Freed Hostage was Offered Food to Convert to Islam



Rom's mother:

Rom Braslavski, 21, in a video released by terrorists holding him in the Gaza Strip, August 2025. Credit: Courtesy.

By Maytal Yasur Beit-Or

(JNS) – Rom Braslavski, one of the 20 hostages freed by Hamas last Monday as part of a U.S.-brokered ceasefire, was held alone for two years, and was offered better treatment if he agreed to convert to Islam.

His testimony was shared with the media via his mother, Tami Braslavski, at Ramat Gan's Sheba Hospital, where he is being treated.

During some of those two years, his only company was the bodies of murdered hostages, she said. She added that upon his return to Israel, he had reported the location of the bodies to Brig. Gen. (res.) Gal Hirsch, Israel's National Coordinator for the Hostages and the Missing.

Tami revealed that her son had not been held in tunnels and suffers from blood sugar fluctuations due to being force-fed shortly before his release.

During the first four weeks of his captivity, Rom was held in a "bad place," she said. "He freed himself from handcuffs and set clothes alight, causing a fire. Smoke came pouring out of the room. A Gazan mob began pounding on the windows and the door," she added.

"Rom became hysterical. 'What do I do now – if they discover I'm here, I'll die in a lynching,' he thought. What

went through his head was the Ramallah lynching of Israeli soldiers," she said, referring to the brutal murder of two Israeli reservists by a mob in the Palestinian city on Oct. 12, 2000, during the Second Intifada.

"He hid under a blanket. Eventually, a mob of some 40 people broke in, and they saw the handcuffs. They then understood that a prisoner was being held captive there."

"Rom recited the *Shema Yisrael* prayer to God and told him, 'I can't end like this, you didn't take me out of there to end in a lynching. I'm not going like this.' Then he heard keys at the door. His abductor suddenly returned. He got rid of the mob and moved Rom to a slightly better place," she said.

"I'm Jewish, I'm Jewish!"

His captors abused him psychologically, telling him that Iran had bombed Israel, that his parents weren't at the protests at Hostage Square, she said.

His abductor would come once a day, at noon, to bring him food and take him to the bathroom.

"Now on his return, he keeps saying, 'I'm Jewish. I'm a strong Jew,'" she added.

"It was so important to him to main-

tain his Jewish identity because they asked him to convert to Islam and tempted him, saying, 'If you fast during Ramadan, we'll give you food and soap. Rom didn't break. We brought tefillin to the hospital and he put them on.'

"Everyone talks to him and wants to make him happy, and I asked him, 'Rom, what do you need?' and he tells me, 'Mom, I don't need anything, why would they do this for me?'

"He doesn't understand how much of a hero he is and how much people want

to give to him. He only wants to stand at the window and look at the sky. The air does him good."

She also said that between April and July, when two videos of him were distributed to the media, his captors stepped up the abuse.

"They would come in several times a day and beat him. But he absorbed it. He told me, 'Mom, I knew it would pass. I said to myself that it's only a period, and it will pass, it will end, it will end' – and that's how he got through it." **HW**

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