



THE TRUTH BEHIND THE COMMUTE

A HAMILTON STUDENT TELLS ALL

NOAM WOLFE

Every student gets to school at around 8:00 am (although it varies), and every student leaves school at around 5:30 pm. Nonetheless, time at home varies significantly, depending on the student. A student could have volleyball practice, Mishmar, or in some cases, a commute. The key difference between a student from Hamilton and a student from Toronto is their time at home. While most Toronto students get home at around 6:00-6:30, the students who take the hour-and-a-half shuttle ride home arrive at around 7:30 (with no traffic). In addition, some Hamilton students wake up at 5:30 in the morning, and leave the house around 6:20. This means that the average Hamiltonian gets home, enjoys the luxury of about 11 hours of at-home time, a good portion of which is stolen by sleep, and returns to the shuttle, to start yet another sleep-deprived, 13-hour school day.

Although reading about how hard it is to commute everyday sounds like a blast, there are more important things to discuss, for example: What happens on the shuttle? What really goes on during the hour-and-a-half ride to and from school? As not only the author of this article, but also as a resident Hamiltonian, I can answer these questions, and uncover the truth behind the commute. To start, let's discuss the crowd. On the shuttle, that big white bus-looking thing, there are students from four different schools: Or Chaim (4), Ulpana (5), Tiferes (4) and Keter Yoseph (2). That brings the shuttle population to 15 people in total, although the average per day is about 10.

But back to the topic, the experience on the shuttle during the trip to school is relatively unchanging. Every morning people get on the

shuttle, and go to sleep for the remainder of their ride. If you ever see a Hamiltonian in the morning looking like they could fall asleep right then, and they are complaining about how they have to wake up so early, don't buy it. All that drowsiness is in fact simply because the Hamiltonians have just woken up.

On the other hand, the ride back is a whole different story. I wish I could say that we are productive and do homework on that long ride back home, but that is simply a fantasy for some, and a nightmare for others. I would divide the ride home into two categories. Number 1: silence. During a ride in which silence is present, the residents of the shuttle are usually sleeping, talking quietly in the back, or on occasion, doing homework or Shnayim Mikra. On silent days, the lack of food is palpable, people who don't have food are begging and asking around, desperately hoping that someone will be kind enough to share, while people who do have food are using all of their willpower to save the food for a later part of the trip, knowing that the hunger will only get worse. Silent days can also consist of random Snapchat photos being taken, movies being watched or staring out the window and thinking deep thoughts.

HOWEVER, silent days are not always the case on the shuttle. The second category is discussion. During a day in which discussion is present, a variety of scenarios can play out. First of all, hunger is usually forgotten (except in special cases) because everyone is focused on the topic at hand. Discussions can be started in many different ways; for example a common argument that breaks out every so often is the debate about Or Chaim versus Ulpana (these arguments mostly

consist of one-sided bragging about Or Chaim). Another common form of discussion is complaining. For example, we have recently been having difficulty with the school drop-off order. This is a hot topic of discussion, which repeatedly comes back to the same lines such as "we better get to school on time tomorrow", or "I'm going to tell my parents about this". Among the many topics of conversation throughout the year, a common one is food fantasy, in which residents of the shuttle fantasize about food supply in the shuttle. Whether it's a communal snack box or a pizza oven, when teenagers really want food, reality is an optional activity.

Besides the shuttle experience, there are few facts worth mentioning. One of the little known features of the shuttle is its rules. No music audible to others, no nuts, and no boisterous activity that can cause disturbances to others (this last rule is not followed with the utmost respect). Of course, there are some unspoken rules too, for example, seating arrangements, which are usually pretty flexible considering the number of empty seats each day. And of course, everyone wants a specific order for pick-up and drop off. If that order is ever messed with, there will be some angry students.

After only a year of this experience, I am more than just sleep deprived. Three hours per day, Hamiltonians throughout the Bnei Akiva Schools community go through foodless fantasy and strict seating. Will Hamiltonians continue to show up everyday looking like they just woke up? Undoubtedly. Will they ever fix their food supply problems? Probably not. Will they survive the years to come in which the average drop off time gets later and later? Only time will tell.



UO COLOUR WAR 2023

MIA BELDEB

On March 16-17, Ulpana celebrated our favourite holiday...Colour War! Team Midbar, represented by the colour yellow, and Team Yam Suf, represented by blue, competed against each other for two days of pure ruach in one of Ulpana's closest Colour Wars yet. The school's atmosphere was charged with excitement and energy as the two teams participated in a series of activities and challenges. The competition was intense, and the girls from both teams put forth their best efforts to secure victory for their respective teams while demonstrating enthusiasm, dedication, and sportsmanship.

Throughout Colour War, Ulpana buzzed with activity, with girls participating in a variety of events designed to showcase their different talents. Whether it was singing, dancing, or sports, each girl brought her unique skills to the table to help her team succeed. The events were carefully planned to ensure that each team and girl had an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and earn points for their team.

Despite the competitive nature of the event, the girls also found time to come together and support each other. The sense of unity and achdut that emerged during Colour War was truly inspiring, and it was clear that the girls were having a great time working together and celebrating each other's talents.

On Thursday morning, the highly anticipated

announcement of the six captains marked the beginning of an eventful day at Ulpana. The captains, filled with energy and enthusiasm, swiftly organized their respective teams and held team meetings to ensure that every girl had an active role to play throughout the day. Whether it was joining the basketball team, baking delicious treats, or tackling a 1000-piece puzzle, the exceptional captains took it upon themselves to ensure that each girl was involved in the day's events. As the day progressed, the teams engaged in various competitive games, including Minute to Win It, Simon Says, Human Hungry Hungry Hippos, and the beloved annual Apache race. Amidst the adrenaline-filled moments of the race, the cheer-leading squads from each team prepared for the halftime show, where they had the opportunity to showcase their skills and perform their routines in front of the rest of the school. To wrap up the amazing day, both teams gathered for Mincha and then competed in a Chidon Kahoot.

In the evening, teams returned to the school to decorate and prepare for the Judge visits. Team Midbar created a beautiful yellow desert in the lunchroom, while Team Yam Suf decorated the top floor and created an ocean in a classroom. The teams did an amazing job hosting and Studco had a great time!

Friday morning was jam-packed with Divrei Torah from both teams, and hilarious Top Tens.

The teams then competed in a breakfast bake-off for the Judges and, while Studco enjoyed their baked goods, the captains held team meetings. The rest of the day consisted of themed fashion shows and presentations. Freshies from each team painted walls relating to their team's theme, Sophomores presented their creative Stomps, Juniors shared their Grade 11 contributions, and Seniors played their team's promo videos. Then each team presented their incredible Shelets, Lip Syncs, and theme songs. Most memorably, each team presented their commercials. Team Midbar advertised their Midbar survival kit and featured many teachers using their products. Team Yam Suf promoted their fish by blindfolding teachers and having them stick their hands in fish bowls. The entire school laughed and truly enjoyed watching all of the creative presentations.

At the end of a neck-and-neck competition, Team Midbar emerged victorious; but all girls came away from Colour War as winners, as the true achievement was creating a sense of community and sisterhood that was felt across the school.. Colour War 2023 at Ulpana was a memorable and successful event that brought together the entire school community in a fun and meaningful way. Studco hopes everyone had the best time... we definitely did!

BNEI AKIVA SCHOOLS AT MODEL UN

WHAT'S YUNMUN ALL ABOUT?

NOAH BERGER

On February 5, 2023, Bnei Akiva Schools sent their Model UN team representing the country of Mexico to compete in the Yeshiva University National Model United Nations (YUNMUN) conference. The team, led by UO graduate Eli Yissar (21'), met once weekly to strengthen their research, debate, and negotiation skills. In the weeks leading up to the conference, we convened multiple times a week to finalize research, hold intense debates, and work on resolution papers to solve the topics being discussed.

To give a bit of a background to the Model UN program: in an ordinary practice session, the chair (head) of the committee announces a topic to be debated. This can vary greatly, from topics debated this school year such as the Ukraine war, tourism and safety in Mexico, the global refugee crisis, child marriage, and Israel's involvement on the global stage. As we spent weeks debating these different topics, we also began preparing for the YUNMUN conference that was taking place in February. It began with doing basic research into Mexico's history, politics and economic status. As we got closer to the conference, we were selected to represent Mexico on different United Nations committees such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Disarmament & International Security Committee (DISEC), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

In order to participate in the YUNMUN conference, you are required to submit two position papers that state your country's position on the topics given. As well, you must collect and organize as much research as possible about both your country and the other countries in your committee. This research does not only include information relevant to the debate, but also general information about the other countries' political, economic and societal situations and conflicts.

Perhaps all this information can seem daunting, but I promise you that Model UN is a really fun experience. You get to practice your speaking and debate skills—skills that are essential for life. You get to bond with friends, meet new people and expand your horizons beyond the traditional classroom setting. You don't need to be heavily involved in current events and politics; all you need to have is a drive and passion for debating, public speaking and researching. As Yael Diena, a Grade 10 student at UO put it: "YUNMUN was super awesome, and I got to meet people from all over, some of which I'm still in contact with. I think MUN is one of the rare clubs where you can learn really important research and speaking skills, but still actually have fun in." Noam Eizicovics, a Grade 11 Student at YOC, echoed these same views where he highlighted how "students participated in meaningful and engaging debate with high school students from across the continent, strengthening their ever-so critical public speaking and quick-thinking skills."

Our Model UN team is looking to expand for more students at BAS, and we hope you can join us next year and take part in a program where you can build life skills, meet new people, and put a nice accomplishment on your resume. We look forward to your participation in what is truly an amazing program at BAS!

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MODEL UN, FEEL FREE TO CONTACT:

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RABBANIT RECAP

CEECEE BERGMAN

Each year, the grade 11s produce a play known as Rabbanit. They put a Purim twist on an existing popular movie, by modifying the characters and incorporating fitting plotlines. This year, our grade selected the movie *Smurfs* for Rabbanit. We worked together consistently, from selecting a movie at the beginning, up until the final rehearsal. The process of putting this play together required immense dedication, effort, and collaboration from every girl in the class. In order to craft a seamless production, each girl joined a committee that interested her, whether that be choreographing dances, scriptwriting, fundraising, acting, making props – the list goes on. This gave everyone a platform to display her valuable talents.

In a class of 36 girls with conflicting opinions and ideas, it was often hard to avoid disagreements and frustrations, but we managed to navigate them and find solutions, particularly by listening to each other to ensure everyone's voice was heard. Many of the team-working skills that aided our ability to get over these hiccups were learned on our recent winter retreat at Camp Mini-Yo-We. We completed special bonding activities, and it was also the first time the fruits of our labour became evident, as we practiced our play for hours during the retreat. Much of our success can be tied to our time at Mini-Yo-We, as it gave us time to practice and strengthen our bond with one another.

Reflecting on Rabbanit, I spoke with a few girls in the grade who each had a different role in the play to describe her Rabbanit experiences. Ruthy Cantkier, one of our amazing directors, emphasized how valuable working together was and said: "I really enjoyed directing, and I think that it's not just about telling people what to do, but rather leading a team with a common goal and guiding them through all the bumps and challenges to achieve it. Teamwork definitely played a major part in the success of Rabbanit, and I think we learned a lot about unity as a whole grade."

Adina Shoshan, the backstage manager shared how important everyone's contribution was to make the final performance and added: "It was really amazing seeing how everything came together from backstage. Every single committee worked extremely hard, and through all the chaos, each one came together to form an amazing play."

Bella Novokolsky, a scriptwriter and actress, reflected on the production and how it impacted her, saying: "It was a meaningful experience. I really got to create a deeper connection with the girls in my class. I figured out how to work with a big group of people that bring out the best in me. I'm really grateful for this experience and will never forget it."

Overall, the annual tradition of Rabbanit brings the grade 11 students together, allowing us to collaborate and showcase our unique abilities. Each of us has learned valuable lessons such as communication, teamwork, and problem solving. Every single girl continuously invested her all making Rabbanit 2023 a smashing success!



Grade 11 students at Camp Mini-Yo-We.

JUDGMENT IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

MALKA MOSHKOVITS, MIRIAM LEVINE, AND LIAM POPPER

As a senior at Ulpana, nearing the end of my last year, I have been thinking over my years of high school. I've had an incredible time and loved it so much, but I've noticed a consistent theme: judgment. I spoke to some friends about this and they noticed it too. I decided to send out a survey to all the students at Ulpana and about 20% filled it out. 100% of all respondents said they have been judged at some point in their lives. The survey results also showed that people who identified as a minority were more likely to say they felt unsafe in the Jewish community. The same people were also more likely to agree that judgment by others has caused issues in relationships with other Jewish community members, and could lead to a mental health decline for them. Amid a mental health crisis, this issue is extremely relevant. Judgment is an unsolvable reality for everyone, but it can be lessened. Within the Jewish community, people are frequently judged, for their skirts being too long or too short, for not keeping kosher or for keeping strictly kosher, and for keeping Shabbat or not keeping Shabbat. There seems to be no way to escape judgment. Everyone seems to experience it and it seems as if there is no right move. Phrases frequently heard in the community include: "Her skirt is way too short", "I heard he doesn't keep Shabbat"; and "I saw them buying a non-kosher drink from Starbucks." Judgment is an ongoing issue in the Jewish community which seems to be causing divisions in an already tiny

group. Judgment in this community spans from judgment of people's religiousness, appearances and what they do and say, to judging their identities, communities and minority groups.

'Tznius' is a frequently talked about conversation within the walls of the Jewish community, whether that's civilly discussing different standpoints or putting others down for religious beliefs on tznius. One of the many great things in Judaism is that there tend to be multiple different opinions on commandments. However, this room for discussion and different takes, also causes disagreement, because of how much grey area there is within the laws of tznius. As a result, heavy judgment has formed towards those that have different views and standpoints on tznius. Stigma has developed surrounding those that keep a different degree of tznius than others. In both the more 'frum' and 'secular' communities, individuals are looked down upon for their level of tznius. Whether this comes in the form of vocal comments, or snide looks, it is judgmental. According to Yael Diena, an Ulpana sophomore, "There is a very rigid expectation of what your level of tzniut should be, not only among Ulpana students but among staff as well. Although students aren't allowed to bring non-kosher Starbucks drinks into school, there's no dedicated 'drink patrol' that walks around scanning people's cups. There is, however, a designated 'skirter' that walks around checking girls' skirt lengths. Given



Grade 11 students at the Grade 11 Retreat.

that these issues are equally prevalent, I think that's clearly cherry-picking rules to enforce." Whilst very important, the topic of tzniut goes beyond wearing skirts to the knee, and shirts to the elbow and collarbone. Tzniut, modesty, goes beyond what people wear.

Furthermore, the Torah explicitly states that fellow Jews must be treated with love and respect. In Vayikra 19:18, it says, "ואהבה לרעך כמוך". This commandment describes treating everybody with the same love given to oneself. However, if this is the case, why is there still such an extreme amount of judgment in a community that values love and kindness? When it comes to more 'frum' communities, there seems to be a significant amount of judgment towards individuals that don't 'look' or 'act' like everyone else. When there is someone that does not meet the 'ideal' image of the appropriate Jewish girl, people seem to immediately take a second glance, projecting judgment. One of my co-writers, Miriam Levine, commented: "I went to Bais Yaakov Elementary School, and my parents had a really difficult time getting me and my sisters in because our parents are Baal Teshuvah. I know that many people had similar experiences with the application process. When I went to Eitz Chaim, I had a friend that applied to Bais Yaakov Elementary every single year, but her mother is a convert, and she kept getting rejected." It may be that the schools are concerned about maintaining a certain standard in their school. However, if the students coming from more 'secular' day schools were applying because they identified with the more religious atmosphere and wanted a more religious environment, then surely this would not be a problem.

Many are familiar with the popular saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover," which serves as a powerful metaphor reminding us to look beyond surface appearances. Within the Jewish Community, there exists a prevailing standard of physical appearance that can unintentionally breed feelings of inaccuracy and self-doubt amongst those who don't conform. This pressure to fit an idealized image hinders the development of a healthy self-image. To address this issue, the Jewish Community must foster inclusivity, challenge stereotypes through education and awareness, promote self-acceptance and engage in conversations about body positivity and mental

well-being. As well, individuality and personality are frequently judged by others. In the secular community, dyed hair, alternative styles, multiple piercings and dramatic makeup are regular parts of life, but in the Orthodox community, some attribute it to going off the derech. However, people's chosen self-expression generally has no connection to their religiosity and it is not fair to judge it as such. In truth, some students have said they hold themselves back at school for fear of people judging their true personalities. They invent a separate version of themselves for school, to avoid judgment. This is concerning, as personality is, like its name, personal, and should not be an item subject to judgment. People are who they are and judging people only distances people from the community. By embracing diversity and celebrating individuality, the community can break free from unrealistic standards and create an environment where all members feel valued and accepted.

The judgment between different sects of Judaism has been much discussed, for example, in Philip Roth's story "Eli, the Fanatic." Orthodox Jews make certain assumptions about Reform Jews, and the same is true the other way around. I, Malka Moshkovits, would personally like to comment on this case: A few weeks ago I went on a Shabbaton with an organization named Keshet. Well, the Shabbaton had a pluralistic Jewish community. For the first time in my life, I met non-Orthodox Jews, and I realized we're not so different. Even though there are huge differences between Reform and Orthodox, we still have a lot in common, and I was pleasantly surprised when they used the same tune for Kiddush and Havdalah as I do. Reform and Orthodox Jews have been at odds since the founding of the Reform movement, as Reform Jews increased the threat of assimilation and opposed many central aspects of Judaism, but the judgment in modern times seems to have gone too far. Despite the major differences, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews are all Jews and would benefit from being unified. The Jewish community has been persecuted for years, but the persecutions did not specify the sect of Judaism. In an already marginalized society, the communities uniting together, not distancing themselves apart, would benefit all involved.

Furthermore, there is a very prevalent issue of LGBTQ+ acceptance in the Jewish community. A study conducted by Israel's Health Ministry found that 20% of gay and lesbian Orthodox Jewish youth had attempted suicide, compared to 3.5% of Israeli youth as a whole. Many queer Jews report feeling judged and uncomfortable in religious environments. I personally can state that as an out gay student at Ulpana, I've had to jump over an expected amount of hurdles. The school has tried its very best to help me and my friends but, as expected, it has limitations. I love our school, but I have experienced extreme judgment, for something I can't change. I've been in classes where fellow students and even teachers have called LGBTQ+ people abnormal and sinners. My friends have been called homophobic slurs by classmates and have overheard a student saying that she would 'kill herself if she was gay.' I admire all that the school has done, but this issue of judgment against LGBTQ+ Jews, is outside the school's influence, this is an issue that the greater Jewish community must try to change. Queerness in Judaism can be a touchy subject, as the Torah does explicitly forbid same-sex relations. However, homophobia does not prevent Jews from entering into same-sex relationships, it makes them feel the need to hide it. Tragedies are preventable; what do we need to do in our school to prevent them from happening to one of our students?

Despite all of the above, in a world where decisions must be made every day, judgment does serve as an important tool for individuals and society as a whole. It allows people to assess situations, evaluate evidence, and make informed choices. Judgment enables people to discern right from wrong, identify potential risks, and navigate complex ethical dilemmas. It empowers everyone to weigh different perspectives, consider consequences, and exercise critical thinking. As well, judgment fosters accountability and responsibility, as it encourages individuals to reflect on their actions and make improvements. Ultimately, judgment plays an integral role in shaping personal growth, promoting justice, and contributing to a harmonious and thriving community. However, this beneficial judgment is a different type of judgment, not like the judgment in today's society. There is a fine line between judgment which is the catalyst to improvements and judgment which simply tears others down. Society seems to be hovering on the negative side of this balance.

People in the Jewish community are constantly facing judgment from fellow community members. A community that values love and kindness should not include such a large amount of judgment towards others. When Orthodox Jews fall outside the unrealistic mould set for them, they experience frequent judgment about their appearance, self-expression and personality. Many are forced to create a fake version of themselves to be accepted within the community. As well, different sects of Judaism tend to judge each other heavily and forget that they are a part of the same marginalized group. Those who are Jewish and part of another minority may face complex obstacles, including judgment from within the Jewish community. Judgment is a complex problem that will never be fully resolved but it is also an issue that everyone has a part in. If everyone does their part and cuts down on their negative judgements, slowly, the issue may be able to be diminished, and the community can be strengthened and united.

¹ Voluntary surveys tend to have something called "voluntary bias", because there is no direct incentive, generally only people who feel strongly about the issue will fill it out. To get accurate results, the survey would need to be mandatory.

² https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1406&context=undergrad_rev

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT:

Mrs. Deutsch

MALKA MOSHKOVITZ

“My favorite thing about Ulpana. I don’t know. Sort of like, generally speaking, everything, like Ulpana is my happy place.”

Mrs. Deutsch has been a Judaic Studies teacher at Ulpana for five years now, but is also a social media influencer and has been a professional makeup artist. So how did she get here?

Mrs. Deutsch went to Eitz Chaim for elementary school. Her dreams of what to do when she got older changed over the years. At one point she wanted to be a veterinarian, which she says is funny because science was not her thing. She wanted to play with animals all day, but she found out that’s not what veterinarians do.

Mrs. Deutsch spent the majority of her childhood wanting to be a Broadway actress. When she was a child, her mom used to listen to soundtracks from musicals all the time and she got into musicals through that. She enjoyed listening to the music and watching the plays so she thought it would be fun to do. Her favorite musical is Les Miserables, followed by Phantom of the Opera. As a child, Mrs. Deutsch liked doing gymnastics, drawing, acting and using her imagination. She went to Ulpana for high school, and in grade 9 or 10, she was in the school play.

For seminary, she went to Midreshet Harova. She describes it as a really cool experience because she got to leave home and be independent, be in Israel, learn a lot, and have fun. After Harova, she went to York University. She had wanted to go into interior design but was told not to by her parents, and chose to study English instead. She even entertained the idea of being an English professor for a short period of time.

After university, Mrs. Deutsch was an office administrator for about a year and a half. After this, she started a family and was a stay-at-home mother for a while. Then, she decided to go back to school for makeup artistry. She worked as a makeup artist for a number of years and then worked at NCSY before she started teaching at Bnei Akiva Schools. While she was working for NCSY, she had been doing public speaking and then was invited to speak at mother-daughter night at Ulpana.

Speaking at mother-daughter night led her to be asked if she’d ever considered teaching, and after a few conversations, Mrs. Deutsch decided to try it out. Since she’s an alumna of Ulpana, she described starting to teach here like “coming home.” She thinks of Ulpana as relaxed and not overly formal, “like a camp”, and she says the teachers and students have nice relationships. Her favourite thing about teaching is her students. She likes getting to know them and watching them grow during such a formative period in their lives. She also says that her students help her grow too, by introducing her to new ideas and perspectives.

Her advice for her students is, “Chill out. There’s a fine line between taking it seriously and taking it too seriously, right? You are not your grades. You are not your papers. High school is four years. So try to put that into perspective. Also, you’re going to mess things up. You’re going to fail. Things are going to happen. Like, it’s okay. Right? You’re going to get out there into the big, wide world, and you will faceplant, at some point in time, with something in life. And what’s going to get you through that is not your 98 average from high school. It’s going to be the resilience and the perseverance that you develop, the ability to say, okay, oops, I made a mistake. Something messed up. This went wrong. This went terribly wrong. What can I do now? How can I learn from it? How can I improve for next time? What are the salvageable things? There’s so many life lessons that you really need that are going to help you way beyond whether or not you remember that formula or you got a 98.”

“Try to zoom out of it and have that bigger perspective.”





THE SUPER MARIO MOVIE

Does it Really Deserve Being “BASH”ed?

JORDAN JESIN

“Let’s-a-go!”

Video Games. T.V series. Action figures. Board games. Clothes. Books (probably). Even a live action movie. Nintendo has truly used Mario and his universe in almost every single form of media...but one box was left unchecked, and it was arguably the most obvious one. That’s when Nintendo announced on January 31, 2018 that the animated Super Mario Movie was officially in the works. As time passed, and more information was announced, people became utterly hyped (that is, until Chris Pratt was cast as Mario; it’s okay though, it worked out well), and I was no exception. As someone who has played Mario games since the peak of the Wii, I expected this film to be one for the books. I’ll admit, seeing the 54% critic rating on Rotten Tomatoes was a bit off-putting, but it was good to start with low expectations. Fast forward to opening weekend (Chol Hamoed Sunday, of course) and I was off to Cineplex for a matinee showing. From the first second I walked in, I already felt right at home. I was even given cool paper Mario and Luigi hats (as seen above)! When the Nintendo logo was shown on the big screen, I was only able to think, “WA-HOO!”

One movie showing later, I had my entire review in my head, ready to be written down at that very moment. First off – the score? Fansh-mastic. There was no better feeling than hearing my favourite video games being played by an orchestra in a theater. That was an easy 10/10. The animation? Insane. I’ve never seen Mushroom Kingdom or even Bowser’s Kingdom look so beautiful. And the easter eggs, don’t even get

me started. They were just simply *chef’s kiss*. But the plot and script? Ehhhhhh, could’ve been better.

Let me tell you, the story was fine, I was never particularly mad about it, but let’s compare this movie to Chris Pratt’s other movie, The Lego Movie. That film was one of the greatest and most comedic films of the modern day. You know why? Because it was made for both kids and adults! It was the perfect mix, and that is what led it to become so successful. Compare that to The Super Mario Movie, and the latter doesn’t sound too amazing. I just felt like the script was written by a second grader. For example, when one of the Koopas was about to throw a Blue Shell, they literally yelled, “BLUE SHELL!!!!” Like, yeah bud, we can see that it’s blue, and we know the item from the game anyway. That really bothered me. However, Joseph Cantkier, a local grade 9 student, felt differently. “I left the theater feeling really happy, really excited, and loving the Nintendo universe even more than I did before. I felt that my love for Nintendo almost paid off in a sort of sense.” Maybe I’m being too harsh? That’s for you to decide. After all, perhaps the extra explanations were necessary for someone who has never played a Mario game before. They may not know what a blue shell does in the first place, but I digress.

Did I have a good time? (Mario voice) “Aw-yeah”. Would I watch it again? 1000%. Do I wish it could’ve been better? Perhaps. Am I happy with the results? Definitely. Do I listen to Jack Black’s “Peaches” daily? You know it. All in all, I rate this movie 3.5 mushrooms out of 5.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SPORTS

SHMUEL FISCH

When it comes to sports, it’s not just skill and physical ability that determines success; mental toughness is also important. The way athletes think and feel can have a major effect on their ability to perform at their best, and sports players who want to improve their game must understand sports psychology.

Motivation is one of the most crucial components of sports psychology. Intrinsic motivation is more powerful than extrinsic motivation, which comes from external rewards such as money or fame. According to a 2023 study by Mageau and Vallerand, intrinsically motivated sports players who are spurred by their love of the sport or their desire to improve outperform those who are motivated by external rewards.

Another important factor in sports psychology is confidence. Athletes who believe in their ability perform better under pressure. Lack of confidence can cause anxiety and self-doubt, both of which can impair athletic performance. According to a study published in the Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, sports players who are more confident have faster reaction times, better focus, and are more likely to set and achieve goals.

Visualization is also an important component of sports psychology. It involves mentally rehearsing a performance or skill and imagining oneself succeeding in a particular situation. This technique can assist athletes in developing confidence, improving focus, and reducing anxiety. According to one study that tested male and female student-athletes in baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, lacrosse, and dance, those who used visualization techniques had a significant increase in weight moved during a lift. The positively visualizing group could move 10-15 lb. more, while the other group only demonstrated a 5 lb. increase.

There are numerous real-world examples of sports psychology in action. Michael Jordan used visualization techniques to help him prepare for the gold medal game against Croatia in the 1992 Olympics. He imagined himself hitting key shots and leading the team to victory, resulting in a dominant performance and a gold medal for the United States. One of my favorite quotations by Jordan (about visualization) is when he said “If I had stood at the free-throw line and thought about 10 million people watching me on the other side of the camera lens, I couldn’t have made anything. So I mentally tried to put myself in a familiar place. I thought about all those times I shot free throws in practice and went through the same motion, the same technique that I had used thousands of times. You forget about the outcome. You know you are doing the right things. So you relax and perform.”¹

¹<https://www.azquotes.com/quote/591898>

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Serena Williams, similarly, has attributed her success to her mental toughness and ability to remain focused and positive during matches. According to Merlisa Lawrence Corbett, author of *Serena Williams: Tennis Champion, Sports Legend, and Cultural Heroine*, Williams wrote down goals and brought them to her games.

Sports psychology is an important aspect of athletic success. Sports players' performance can be influenced by a variety of factors, including motivation, confidence, and visualization. They can improve their mental toughness, achieve their goals, and reach their full potential by understanding and applying the principles of sports psychology.

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To the future YOC students:

PRACTICE MAKES PROGRESS

AHARON TORCZYNER

“A regular archer practices until they get it right, a Ranger practices until they don’t get it wrong.”

It’ll probably shock you to hear that this is my yearbook quotation. It clearly doesn’t make sense. If you’re practicing until you get don’t get it wrong, you’ll be practicing... forever.

It’s one of two lessons that I’ve learned in writing that convinced me to write for the BASH. Through continuous writing, continuous practicing, and continuously putting your work out there, it creates progress.

I realized as I was progressing through high school that I had certain ideas, certain aspects of hockey that I wanted to talk about. Most Leaf fans didn’t want to listen to my hockey takes – fair enough – but these were topics I was passionate about, such as concussions, as well as why the Leafs were destined to never win again. Writing for the BASH meant I was able to get my opinions out there.

The truth is though, you could theoretically take these two lessons and apply them to writing for a website, or a newspaper. What makes the BASH something worth writing for?

There are some obvious reasons to it, such as bragging to your friends and an extra line on your resume, but it’s the ability to develop your writing into what you want it to be like, with teachers and students who can give you proper feedback. Also, you get to put your opinions out there to start discussions, as well as for others to read your writing, in a newspaper that has the ability to connect the school.

For those who are going to be at Bnei Akiva Schools next year, I’d highly recommend writing for the reasons mentioned above. For those who aren’t going to be at the school next year (hopefully all of 12th Grade), these lessons that I learned the hard way can be taken for wherever you end up.

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DO YOU HAVE A SCOOP FOR THE BASH OR AN OPINION YOU WANT LIKE TO SHARE? SEND IN YOUR PITCH HERE:

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