

BUSINESS, HALACHA, AND THE FUTURE: A STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE AT THE 2025 H3 BUSINESS HALACHA CONFERENCE

MIA APTOWITZER AND EZRA GOLDBERG

What happens when the modern business world meets the ethics of Halachot? Every year, the H3 Business Halacha Conference attempts to answer that very question by bringing together professionals, business owners, and Rebbanim to tackle the intersection of these two worlds. It's a space where complex financial and ethical dilemmas are analyzed through the lens of Halacha, offering insights that are both practical and honourable. As high school students, we weren't the typical attendees, so what exactly were we doing there? Business Halacha wasn't something we thought much about — it seemed like a topic for experienced professionals, not for teenagers still focused on school. So when we had the chance to attend the H3 Business Halacha Summit, we were curious but unsure of what to expect. It didn't take long for us to realize that business Halacha isn't just a theoretical subject. It has real-world implications for Jewish business owners today and offers valuable insights into ethics, responsibility, finances, and decision-making — things that will shape our careers in the future. Overall, the experience was eye-opening, showing us how Halacha can guide our choices in the business world while staying true to our Jewish values. It was a lesson we could never have fully grasped in a classroom, even while blessed with such incredible teachers and Rebbanim who seek to provide us with real-world knowledge and experiences.

The H3 conference is an event that blends Halachot Choshen Mishpat (Jewish business law) with modern business management, offering a unique perspective on how Jewish law shapes business ethics today. The conference runs throughout a full day, with attendees selecting between various expert speakers, networking events, and (this being a Jewish conference) eating. Every year, speakers include a mix of Rebbanim and businesspeople, and the networking opportunities bring together professionals from a variety of different fields. And with the added benefit of three lavish meals served, the conference truly has something for everyone.

As students, business networking was not our priority, rather we opted to spend most of our time at the conference lectures. The first session we attended was a shiur by Rabbi Mordechai Kanner that focused on how to ethically and halachically use money invested in your business. He spoke about what one is allowed to do with money received as an investment and the circumstances in which you are held responsible for it. The big takeaway is that when you receive an investment, it means that someone else is believing in your idea and helping you execute it, but they are not believing in you. As such, you can only use their help for exactly what it was you have asked for.

We also attended a session led by Ira Zlotowitz and his son Ahron, founders of Eastern Union and GPARENCY. They spoke about using AI to drive efficiency in business, making it clear that AI isn't just the future, it's the present. Ira and Ahron emphasized how embracing technology now is essential for remaining competitive in the business world. Importantly, their insights helped us realize that AI isn't just for business, it's already shaping the way we work, learn, and interact with the world around us.

After attending many informative lectures and a live Q&A session about common Halachic questions in the workplace, we had the chance to watch a live "Shark Tank" presentation! During that session, three Jewish entrepreneurs stood in front of a panel of investors, pitched their business ideas, broke down their financials, and responded to investor questions; all in front of a packed audience. It was fascinating to see entrepreneurs negotiate in real time, defending their respective financial strategies and vision in front of investors.

The conference ended with a keynote presentation by Rav Aaron Kotler. His message was perhaps the one that stuck with us the most as students looking towards their futures: business is for parnasa but it is not a platform for our lives. It's a way to express ourselves as servants

of Hashem and a foundation for our relationship with Hashem.

Throughout the conference, it was fascinating to witness hundreds of business people forming new relationships that will benefit their businesses in the future. There were business owners from every field from insurance and wall panel salesmen to lawyers and real-estate agents; it was truly inspiring to see Jewish leaders excelling in every imaginable line of work. And no matter how different their fields or professions may have been, one of the most inspiring aspects of the conference was witnessing so many confident, successful business owners connecting and sharing their ideas. It was truly a supportive environment with an extraordinary vibe!

It's not a secret that the H3 attendees are practically all men, but there were a handful of women in attendance this year, and it was wonderful to hear that their numbers are growing with each year. We were fortunate enough to speak with one of them, Mrs. Rivky Coffey, who runs Camp Ashreinu and is also the executive director of a couple of other organizations. She told us that her main takeaway from the conference was that one should always think big and more long-term, as opposed to focusing on their current fundraiser. She emphasized that even when something seems intuitive, hearing it from someone else can be the push needed to take action. She added that when attending a conference, one should focus on the few key things they can get out of the conference instead of every single word they hear. If one keeps thinking about the lessons that they learn, they will start to incorporate those lessons into their business practices or daily life, making them a more successful and better person.

Now, no review of a Jewish conference would be complete without mentioning the food, which was definitely a highlight. From the breakfast stations with waffles and soft-serve ice cream

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to a dinner buffet featuring tomahawk steaks, shawarma, Chinese food, and a dumpling bar, the conference did not disappoint. In fact, it felt like an extravagant seudah meal! The food fueled us through a full day of learning, and it was a great way to connect with other attendees and interview them during breaks.

In addition to the outstanding food, everyone at the conference received a high-quality notebook, pen, and a sefer. The entire event was well-organized and incredibly thought out, making it clear that the organizers designed the event with business, Jewish growth, and enjoyment all in mind.

Coming into this conference, we thought business Halacha was something we'd only need to think about in the distant future. What we learned, though, is that these ideas - ethics, decision-making, and responsibility - aren't just for business owners. They're relevant to all of us, no matter what stage we're at. Even though we weren't the target audience, attending the 2025 H3 Business Halacha Conference was a phenomenal educational opportunity for us. We learned so much from the Rabbanim, business owners, and everyone we interacted with. It gave us the opportunity to explore the intersection of Jewish law and modern business in a way that felt both practical and inspiring. We walked away with a deeper understanding of the ethical challenges entrepreneurs face, as well as valuable insights into how Halacha can guide business decisions while staying true to Jewish values. From thought-provoking lectures to engaging discussions on AI and business ethics, every part of the conference left an impact on us. And, of course, the incredible food and welcoming atmosphere made the experience even more memorable.

We want to express our sincere gratitude to Mark Zolty and Yossi Braun for making this opportunity possible for us. Their support and encouragement allowed us to take part in this unique event, and we truly appreciate it. The lessons we learned at H3 will undoubtedly stay with us as we navigate our futures, both in business and in life. ■

Lecture recordings can be found at torontojewishnetwork.org/video-gallery-h3-2025/

MAYIM RABIM

MENACHEM SCHACHTER

It says in Shir HaShirim that the "Raging waters cannot extinguish the love, nor can rivers wash it away". It is taught in chassidus that water refers to the physical matters in this world. When Shlomo Hamelech uses the words, 'raging waters', he is referring to being involved in the chaos of the physical world. He is saying that the connection between Hashem and the Jew will never be extinguished even when one is involved in all these physical matters. It is written in Tehillim: "When you eat the labor of your hands..." This implies that a person should work specifically with his hands, and not necessarily with his heart. When a Jew involves himself with everyday work or a job, he should not be immersed with his whole heart. Rather he should have in his mind that it is because of Hashem's blessings that bring him wealth. Therefore a Jew should not go overboard in his business since in the end, Hashem will decide his fate. However, Shlomo Hamelech reassures us in Shir Hashirim that even if a person does get too carried away in his business, Hashem's love will never go away.

One could question and say, "I feel that the love is extinguished!" Our neshama started in lofty Gan Eden, feeling and seeing all of Hashem's light, then at birth, the neshama gets sent down from the G-dly light, into this world. Therefore a person could think that this love is extinguished since his neshama is down in this world, being much farther from Hashem and receiving very little light. However, one needs to realize how his neshama is really part of the essence of Hashem. This means that no level of physicality can even come close to severing the connection between a person and Hashem. It's not only that the love is not extinguished, rather it is actually made greater by the stormy waters of this physical world.

There is a discussion in Likkutei Torah about the difference between the Tzaddik and the Baal Teshuva. The Baal HaTanya points out that the Baal Teshuva achieves levels that are greater than the Tzaddik. This is because the Baal Teshuva experiences greater struggles than

the Tzaddik, such as needing to first give up and overcome their past, and then to start anew. Since there is an additional struggle for the Baal Teshuva, the Baal Teshuva has the ability to obtain a closer relationship with Hashem than the Tzaddik. Our neshamos are like the Baal Teshuva. They down from a world of being a Tzaddik, to this world full of the mundane. We then instantly get stranded in the raging water. It is important to realize that we are being intentionally placed to struggle, and the struggle will be for our own benefit. Also it is important to realize the pasukin Shir Hashirim, which teaches that even when one is getting lost or distracted in physical matters, Hashem's love will never get extinguished.

Razal said that "Israel arose in G-d's thought". The Maggid of Mezeritch explains that this pasuk is an analogy like a father to a son. When the son moves out of his father's house, the son will still be in the father's mind, even though the son is not physically there with the father. However the only way for a father to have his son in mind is if he actually has a son. However with Bnei Yisroel and Hashem, the case is not the same. Hashem always has every single Jew in the back of His mind, even before He came down to this world; in other words, He is thinking in the past, present and future. The fact that Hashem sees every neshama before coming down to this world means that Hashem sees the potential for each Jew to overcome the raging waters and reach the status of a Baal Teshuva.

This concept can be applied when Yaakov left Lavan's house. During this time Yaakov overcame his struggles and became the status of a teshuva. This only took place through Yaakov's struggle. Each challenge Yaakov got through had him ascend higher. It is taught in Chassidus that when a person overcomes each struggle, it leads to simcha. Additionally when one carries out his Avodas Hashem with simcha, it will cause Hashem's blessings to come down on him. May we all be able to overcome our challenges and serve Hashem with simcha. ■

BECOME A JEWEL: HOW FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE LETS US ALL SHINE

SHAINDY WEITZNER AND YAMAYA NEWMAN

Former U.S. Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey once said, “The greatest gift of life is friendship.” As students at Bnei Akiva Schools, we spend our weekends hanging out with friends, making memories, and even when we’re at school we have tons of opportunities to enjoy an extensive social life. But what about kids and adults with special needs? We know in our society, those facing challenges might have a harder time forming friendships. Everyone deserves to feel included, and that’s where Friendship Circle comes in.

Friendship Circle is an incredible organization that connects kids and adults with special needs to high school volunteers, creating a welcoming and inclusive community. Friendship Circle is powered by, what they call, “5 jewels”: children, families, staff, supporters, and—most importantly—volunteers. This gives all involved an opportunity to grow and shine together. The beauty of the ‘circle’ is that it symbolizes true equality—everyone, no matter their role, is an essential part of the experience. Friendship Circle ensures that each participant, volunteer, and family is valued equally.

At Bnei Akiva Schools, we’re always looking for meaningful ways to give back. If you need to complete volunteer hours, why not do something truly rewarding? Friendship Circle offers programs like Friends @ Home which pairs you with a buddy for fun activities at their house, while Sunday Circle allows you to bond with a designated buddy through exciting group events every week. And that’s just the beginning! Friendship Circle isn’t just about checking off hours—it’s about having fun, making lifelong connections, and doing a huge mitzvah.

As Presidents of Friendship Circle, we volunteer regularly as well as help coordinate events that strengthen achdut and ahavas Yisrael. Volunteers are given guidance on how to interact with their buddies, so there’s no need to worry about how to communicate—we’re all here to learn and grow together.

If you’re looking for a fun, fulfilling, and life-changing way to give back, we encourage you to join Friendship Circle. It’s an experience that will impact you just as much as it impacts the kids you help.

Let’s make Friendship Circle a bigger part of Bnei Akiva Schools. Sign up today—you won’t regret it! ■



THE TRUTH ABOUT PROCRASTINATION

ELI SCHARF

We’ve all been there. The big Math test is tomorrow, the English ISP is due in two days, and somehow, instead of studying, you end up reverting to scrolling through TikTok or watching Netflix. Procrastination is something that everyone does, but why do we do it? It’s not you being lazy, it’s a fight that happens between two parts of your brain. The prefrontal cortex, which is for making decisions, is fighting with the limbic system about whether you should do the task. The limbic system, which is for getting immediate pleasure, wins most of the time; convincing you to put things off for the temporary avoidance from the stress of doing it, even though it ends up leading to more stress and anxiety. Procrastination stems from fear of failure, perfectionism, and doubting yourself. The harder the task is, the easier it is to procrastinate. It’s not bad time management, it’s putting off work knowing it will be a problem for your future self. It’s not laziness because that’s when you don’t try at all. Most procrastinators try but they only do easy work and not anything hard or big.

The effects of procrastination are more than not getting work done. Along with stress, anxiety, and shame, procrastination can even lead to physical symptoms like headaches and tiredness. Pushing off work, even for a little bit of time, makes you feel guilty. As a result, it takes even more motivation to start working the next time you have to. This becomes a loop if you keep pushing it off every time. If this keeps happening, it can ruin your confidence and deter any chance at productivity.

The key to stopping procrastination is to make work less intimidating. One way to do this is to split up big work into little work (smaller, simpler tasks). Little work is easier to start as it is more palatable than taking on the whole project. For example, if you have a big project, you can break it down by choosing a topic and committing one day to research, then making an outline and writing small sections over the next few days. This makes the work feel easier, shorter, and less overwhelming. On top of that, always reward yourself when completing something; whether it’s playing video games or watching a YouTube video, be sure to reward yourself for the work you did put in. Another way to combat procrastination is “The Two-Minute Rule” which is very simple: When something takes less than two minutes to do, do it right away. I’ve been personally using this for the last few months and it really helps getting out of the habit of procrastination and it ensures you don’t push off small things that are still important.

Procrastination isn’t laziness, it’s a habit. A bad one. Condensing hard work into smaller steps, giving yourself rewards, and using the Two-Minute Rule can make even the hardest work easier and less intimidating. With the right strategies and mindset, you can take on procrastination and get things done. ■

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THE DEMISE OF JUSTIN TRUDEAU: WHERE DO LIBERALS GO FROM HERE?

COBY BERGER

Jan. 6, 2025: a day of joy, excitement, and relief among the Canadian people. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, with his Liberal Party polling at a ghastly 16%,¹ had made the decision to resign as leader of the Liberal Party,² while quickly proroguing the government in order to avoid a no confidence vote until a new Liberal leader was chosen. Citizens from all ends of the political spectrum expressed relief, with the opportunity of an upcoming election and the end of the Trudeau era staring them straight in the face. In the aftermath, numerous candidates have emerged for the post of Liberal party leader including former Bank of Canada and Bank of England governor Mark Carney, and former Deputy Prime Minister Crystia Freeland, who famously resigned from Trudeau's cabinet in the weeks before his resignation. Despite all this, the polling shows that the Liberals have still only crept up modestly, which is a concern for those hoping for an upcoming Liberal win. With the election creeping closer and closer by the day, what is next for these directionless Liberals? What will be the future of the party? Do they have a chance at winning this election? To me, there are three clear directions that this party could take, all as a direct result of the upcoming federal election.

The most likely outcome of this election is a strong, and potentially historic Conservative majority. With the Liberals at such a low in the polls, it seems clear at the moment that they are headed for a brutal defeat, and potential relegation to third party status, with the NDP as the official opposition. However, depending on the scale of

the defeat, the future could change for the Liberals. If they are merely brutally defeated, yet still under the impression that they have a solid base of support to build upon, we could see the Liberals gather their wits and aggressively come back to attempt to win the next election. On the other hand, if they are trounced to the point that they potentially only win an amount of seats in the single digits, we could see the end of the Liberal party as we know it today. This could take the form of a merger with the NDP as a single left wing party in order to combat the Conservatives, similar to the union of the Progressive Conservatives and Reform Party into the modern day Conservative Party of Canada.

On the other hand, it is possible that the Liberals are able to recover from the mess of Trudeau, and rise from the ashes. The Liberals are polling in the mid twenties, yet that is around 10% higher than before Trudeau's resignation. Perhaps the Liberals will be able to take that positive momentum and continue the upward trend, pulling off an incredible upset of Pierre Poilievre and the Conservatives. The wild card that could help the Liberals, are Trump's 25% tariffs on Canada. If the new Liberal leader is able to convince voters that he is the right person to fight Trump, it is possible that he could squeak out enough support to pull out a minority government. Making Trump the common Canadian enemy, has the power to lessen the Conservative's claim that the Liberal's are the internal threat. Additional factors including debates, economic crises, and scandals could also all contribute to the election tipping in the Liberals favour.

A final scenario that is not spoken about as often, yet is more likely to happen than most people realize, is the possibility of a Conservative minority government. Without a natural ally to lean upon, similar to what the Liberals had done with the NDP, the Conservatives would be left in power, while at the same time weak, with the Liberals continuing to hold significant power in parliament. This could set up the new leader of the Liberals to quickly turn around and force another election, leading to a quick retake of power by the Liberals. With the unpredictability of politics, the Liberals could capitalize on any situation that worked in their favour to oust the government. For me, this seems to be the most likely scenario. Many people disliked Trudeau, yet would support a Trudeauless Liberal party. On the other hand, the Conservatives should still have enough support to still win the election. Thus it seems to me that this will be the most likely outcome of the upcoming federal election.

Beyond just the Liberals, this election will have an effect on the world as whole. Will Donald Trump and Poilievre be able to form a united North American right wing front? Or will the Liberals win, giving hope back to the progressive parties of the world? Regardless of outcome, it is clear that this election will have a profound effect on the Liberal party that will be felt not just today, but for generations to come. ■

¹ Lévesque, Catherine. "Trudeau Stepping down, Leaving Uncertainty about Race to Replace Him | National Post." Trudeau Stepping down, Leaving Uncertainty about Race to Replace Him, National Post, nationalpost.com/news/politics/justin-trudeau-resignation-prime-minister. Accessed 20 Feb. 2025.

² It is to be noted that he will remain leader until a new leader is chosen

TRUDEAU'S GUN CONTROL: COMMON SENSE SOLUTIONS, OR TYRANNICAL OVERREACH?

BEN DAHARI

Gun control has always been a controversial topic, but under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's administration, the debate in Canada has reached new heights. The government claims to be protecting Canadians in a calculated manner but all they are achieving is carelessly infringing on the rights of law abiding citizens. Are Trudeau's gun control measures really about protecting Canadians, or are they an overreach of governmental power?

Ineffective at Stopping Gun Crime

Trudeau's gun control measures do very little to prevent gun crime. Since his election in 2017, the firearm related violent crime incident rate has risen by ~22%. This is despite Bill C-71, Bill C-21, and "assault style" weapon bans. Instead of targeting criminals, these policies place unjustified burdens on responsible gun owners. Legal gun owners have to go through more gun checks, turn over more of their guns, and stop buying the guns they want, despite legal guns being rarely used in firearm-related homicides by their owners. Trudeau's government has focused on banning broad ranges of firearms, rather than addressing issues like illegal gun trafficking and gang violence. Trudeau's approach does not effectively reduce crime rates, tragically affecting marginalized groups the most.

Infringes on Rights of Law-Abiding Citizens

The Indigenous community feels the brunt of Trudeau's mishandling

of Canada's gun issues. Indigenous Canadians are three times more affected by firearm-related crime. Additionally, so-called "assault style weapons" used in hunting by Indigenous people have been banned by Trudeau. This is especially damaging to the Indigenous community and culture which in many cases is built on hunting and living off the land. The restrictions on firearms are viewed as discriminatory and an attack on their heritage. Responsible hunters and gun owners are being targeted due to the actions of criminals whom they have no relation to.

Assault-Style Firearm Definition

The nature of the assault-style weapons bans adds further salt to the wound of legal gun owners. The definition of "assault-style" firearms under Trudeau's policies is broad and imprecise, with criteria used to classify these weapons being baseless and general, leading to widespread confusion and frustration among legal gun owners. The lack of a precise, functional definition undermines the credibility of the regulations. This creates an environment where the bans appear inconsistent and illogical. The term "assault-style" focuses more on the aesthetics of the firearms rather than their functionality and capacity for carrying out crimes. This results in a situation where a wide range of firearms that are not significantly different in operation from those that remain legal are included in the ban. Focusing on the visual characteristics of firearms, such as certain accessories or design elements, does little to enhance public safety. I would humbly suggest that a more calculated approach would be far more

effective in reducing gun violence and ensuring public safety. The "assault-style weapons ban" has effectively eroded the public trust in the government's ability to manage firearm regulations competently.

Wrapping it up

The debate over Trudeau's gun control policies is multifaceted and deeply personal for many Canadians. While the intent behind these measures may be to protect public safety, the execution and implications have done little to protect Canadians and much to infringe on their rights. These tyrannical policies have reshaped the lives of legal gun owners while causing the public to lose trust in the government. As the country continues to grapple with these issues, it remains to be seen whether these measures will stand the test of time in the coming months after Canadians cast their votes. ■

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AI AT A CROSSROADS

EYAL BENJAMIN

When someone says "AI" the first thing that comes to mind is probably something you're all very familiar with, ChatGPT. Since its release on November 30th, 2022, ChatGPT has dominated the AI scene, the O1 model being the strongest in its class. The only notable competitor to the Open AI's model would be Google's Gemini (released December 6, 2023) which has been doing its best to compensate for lost time, but is overall inferior to ChatGPT with respect to speed, quality of information, accuracy, real-time updates, and privacy. That was up until recently when the Chinese start-up company DeepSeek made headlines with the release of their R1 model on January 20th, 2025. And now it seems ChatGPT has a worthy competitor.

DeepSeek surpassed O1 standardized complex mathematical reasoning tests AIME 2024 and MATH-500, both sweeping GPT-4. The cost to train the base model for DeepSeek was around \$6 million (USD), whereas the cost for GPT-4 is exponentially larger (\$100 million USD). Not only was the cost to develop this model that made it so groundbreaking, but also the hardware used. DeepSeek used close to 2000 chips, while GPT-4 used over 16000. DeepSeek was able to accomplish this using a different kind of reasoning logic than Open AI which, for the sake of the length of this article, I won't go into.

When DeepSeek was released, the chip production company Nvidia's seemingly unstoppable stock dropped by \$600 billion

dollars. By the Monday after DeepSeek was made available, it overtook ChatGPT in downloads on the Apple store. The reason it caused so much panic is simple: DeepSeek's low-cost approach to AI caused many people to believe that America is spending too much on AI (notably, President Trump's recent commitment to spend \$500 billion on AI). Also, while O1 costs money to use, DeepSeek is free, causing many people to switch over. The only discernible issue with DeepSeek is that it is a Chinese app and, therefore, is censored.

To conclude: R1 has disrupted the AI landscape, challenging OpenAI with superior efficiency and lower costs. With competition, economics, and geopolitics at stake, America's hold on AI dominance is slipping. Is this the beginning of a new AI era? Only time will tell. ■

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The BAS Safe Teams that competed in Montreal.



Colour War at UO



Football Friday at YOC



Senior Knights Playoff Game

4 CHANGES THAT WILL TAKE THE BILLS TO THE SUPER BOWL ... NEXT YEAR

EITAN YUNGER

In the previous issue of the BASH, I wrote an article outlining five bright spots in the Bills' roster that could take them to the Superbowl. Unfortunately, those factors were unable to overcome the brilliance of Mahomes, Kelce, Andy Reid (and the refs), and the rest of the Kansas City Chiefs in the AFC Championship Game once again. But on the bright side, the 2024-25 Bills were far better than most predicted and beat impressive teams such as the Lions and Chiefs in the regular season, as well as the Ravens in the playoffs. They absolutely dominated the AFC East, and, if nothing unforeseen happens, it looks like they have the division (and the guaranteed playoff spot) locked up for at least another five years. Despite that, it is now apparent that the status quo for the Bills isn't enough to make it all the way. Therefore, I will highlight four changes the Bills must make to take them the extra mile and to finally make Buffalo Superbowl champions.

Let Cook cook

Joe Brady taking over as offensive coordinator immediately turned the Bills into one of the most feared offenses in the NFL. One of the primary factors contributing to that was Brady finally unleashing James Cook. Cook, who at the beginning of his career was only known as Dalvin Cook's little brother, has made a name for himself in the NFL and had the best season of his career this year. He ran for over 1000 yards, 16 touchdowns and only one fumble on the year. With an average yards per carry of 4.9, if he gets the ball more, he could easily transform to a top three running back in the league.

Trade for Tyreek

This one could be out of reach, but with Tyreek Hill vocalizing his desire to leave the Dolphins, the Bills seem like a great destination for him. All he wants is to play with a world-class QB, and if Josh Allen can convince him to come to Buffalo, he would perfectly fill the void that Stefon Diggs left.

Let the rookie receivers shine

Another big bright spot this season has been rookie WRs Mack Hollins and Keon Coleman. They combined for 90 and 215 yards after catch respectively this season on minimal receptions, and they look like budding stars. The Bills need to invest in their development and increase their value, because down the line they could be huge assets, either on the field or in a trade.

Fix the Defence

The most disappointing part about the Bills this season has easily been their defence. They had 11th worst rushing defense and 13th worst overall defense. All of their individual defensive players have been pretty upsetting, with the highest total tackles on the team belonging to Dorian Williams with a mediocre 117. Whether the solution is finding a new defensive coordinator or trading for stars like Myles Garrett, something needs to be done. ■

"Buffalo Bills Team Stats." ESPN, ESPN Internet Ventures, 3 Feb. 2025, www.espn.com/nfl/team/stats/_/name/buf/buffalo-bills.

SETTLER VIOLENCE IS A PROBLEM

AVINOAM FRIEDMAN

Since the atrocities of October 7th, most of the focus by both Zionist and Pro-Palestinian sources on the Israel-Palestine conflict has been directed at Gaza. However, the effects of the war reach far beyond the southern border. With all the focus on Gaza, many seem to have forgotten about the ongoing conflict between the settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank, and since October 7th the situation has gotten so much worse.

Settler violence is not a new phenomenon. Between 2008 and 2022 there were 785 Palestinians killed and 97,884 injured due to settler violence. When we compare this to the 284 Israelis killed and 6,149 injured in that same time frame,¹ it makes sense that so many people will look at us and assume that we are the bad guys. When you look at what has happened since October 7th it only gets worse. Since October 7th the amount of settler violence has doubled.² In addition, with tensions continuing to rise and the Trump administration removing sanctions on violent settlers,³ this number is sure to increase. As we continue to settle more of Yehuda and Shomron, we need to take steps to ensure that we do not do anything that might put even more international pressure that inhibits us from settling our rightful homeland.

To truly understand the situation, we need to take a look at the population and demographics of the settlers. The number of Israeli settlers in

around 40% of the West Bank is inhabited by the settlers.⁶ Theoretically, this should not be a problem since most of the West Bank is empty land and there is plenty of barren desert to go around, but there are two main sources of conflict.

The first and least addressable issue is highly valued land; areas like Beit-Lechem, East Jerusalem, and especially Chevron, are highly desired by both Jews/Israelis and Muslims/Palestinians. It no longer becomes an issue of land and living space but a fight over religion and heritage. Simply splitting these areas in half accomplishes little and satisfies neither side. In the case of Chevron, this only causes more violence and hatred between the two groups.⁷ So there is a constant tug of war over the areas that inevitably ends in pointless suffering and nothing gained.

However, unlike areas such as Chevron where violence is more understandable (*Note, the violence is not justifiable, but understandable), it is in lower value areas where the violence of radicals (both Zionists and Palestinians) is seemingly more senseless and inexcusable. This stems from settlements being made intentionally to border Palestinian towns and cities (the morality of which is a whole separate issue). Whether you agree with

the existence of those settlements or not, there should be no reason why so much violence is present in these communities. I propose that the reason is simple: racism of many radical Zionists, and the intense hatred of Palestinians towards Israelis and Jews. And so the cycle of violence

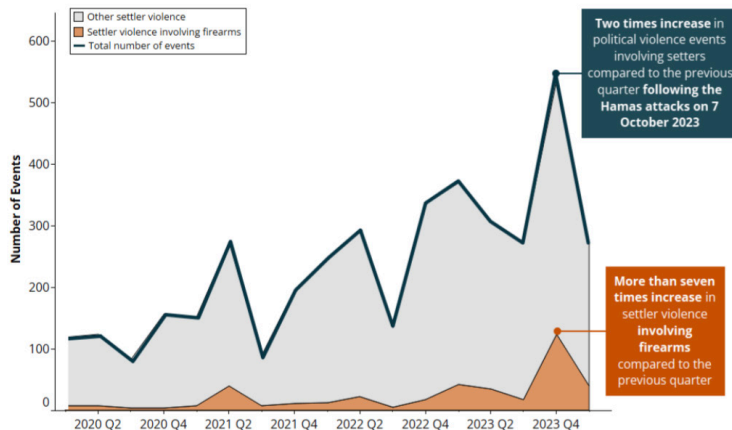
Since 2008, there have been 359 settler fatalities and 6,149 injuries.⁸ That is equivalent to 19% of the 1,852 Palestinian fatalities, and 6% of the 97,884 Palestinian injuries.⁹ But the numbers do not tell the whole story. There are countless incidents of Palestinians breaking into settlements and attacking Israelis in the West Bank, and many of the recorded deaths and injuries are these terrorists who participate in these attacks and are shot.

So what can we do? On the one hand we are dealing with very violent and hateful neighbours who have no interest in peace. On the other hand, we have settlers who use that as justification to commit violent crimes on innocent Palestinians. What we need to accept is that settler violence is violence, a settler who murders a Palestinian is a murderer, and a dead Palestinian is a dead human. The fact that the diaspora Zionist community, especially the religious Zionist community, is willing to close its eyes and plug its ears to these crimes calls into question our commitment to our beliefs and morals. While it is inspiring to see so many of our people take action to reclaim the parts of Eretz Yisrael that have been kept away from us for so many years, the actions taken by some of them are simply inexcusable. If we don't start to call out these horrific crimes, the international community, our gentile allies and God are all going to turn their backs on this honorable mission, and we will have no one to blame but ourselves. ■

¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. "Casualties." OCHA oPt, <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>.
² Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). "Civilians or Soldiers? Settler Violence in the West Bank." ACLED, 10 June 2024, <https://acleddata.com/2024/06/10/civilians-or-soldiers-settler-violence-in-the-west-bank/#1719417764684-056063e1-7497>.
³ Times of Israel Staff. "On Day One, Trump Rolls Back Biden Sanctions Regime Targeting Violent Israeli Settlers." The Times of Israel, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/on-day-one-trump-rolls-back-biden-sanctions-regime-targeting-violent-israeli-settlers/>.
⁴ Times of Israel Staff. "West Bank Settler Population Grew by Nearly 3% in 2023: Report." The Times of Israel, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/west-bank-settler-population-grew-by-nearly-3-in-2023-report/>.
⁵ Ibid
⁶ B'Tselem. "Settlements." B'Tselem - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, <https://www.btselem.org/settlements>.
⁷ Associated Press. "US Officials Say Israeli Settler Violence Against Palestinians in West Bank Is Rising." AP News, <https://apnews.com/general-news-6e669abf0914946854e949a1fc4e22e>.
⁸ Ibid
⁹ Ibid

Political Violence Involving Settlers in the West Bank

January 2020 - March 2024



the West Bank recently crossed 500,000 and has continued to grow at an unprecedented rate, including a 15% increase in settler population in the last five years,⁴ and predictions of continued increase in the coming years.⁵ Furthermore,

continues in these communities leaving individuals on all sides in pain and suffering.

“But what about the violence against settlers?” It does happen, but when looking at the numbers it seems pretty one sided.

Students were tasked with writing a story in 100 words or fewer using only one-syllable words. The winner of the competition will receive a \$25 gift card to Indigo. Below are the submissions; vote for your favourite using the QR code.



EZRA GOLDBERG

He walked on the street. She sprayed up slush as she drove by. He went to play ball. She threw dirt in his eyes. He shopped at the store. She charged him way too high. He took her to court. She claimed, "No, twas not I." He loved his life. She asked him, "Why?" He said to her, "Please stop, just like you, am I." She said, "No you're not, your head is up in the sky." He died the next day. He was put in the ground. To his grave she went not. But to him she was bound.

JACOB ASTROFF

When they asked me, "How are you?" I did not know. I can't say. I don't know how I feel. These past years brought me much pain. No one can guess it. I lived with them. They took me. They hurt me. Each day they said I would die if I did not do what they want. I saw two people I love killed right in front of me. I chose my words with care: "You know what? I'm done. I just want to go home. My loved ones need to see me." One day I might talk about it.

EYAL BENJAMIN

I used to fly through clear skies. Now I taste the foul air. In times long gone the woods were my home. Now I flee from it with singed wings. Fish lie dead on the bays of gray lakes. I saw the tree ere it fell. I saw the ice before the melt. Still, as my old frame flies through the once-calm clouds and sees the slow death of the world, I can not help but muse how it came to be, or if it shall ever be fixed.

SHAINDY WEITZNER

In the nest of the blur, there was a bird with red wings, the hue of flames; not the same as her peers. So, sick of the feel of spurn, the bird took off to the bright blue. This was her first view of the great vast skies. Such light was not like what she had ever seen, a gleam of new. She felt at peace, there, a part of the "odd," what stood out. A life in the dark had rid the bird's mind of all else. But, to have the guts to lift the veil may bring joy.

ROBYN FREIHEIT

I'm at the fun fair. The line for this ride was long, but it was worth it! "AAHH!" we all yell as we drop. Wind whips my hair. It's time for lunch, so I wait in a short line to buy a hot dog. The lines for the big rides are long now, so I head to a calm raft ride. Cool spray mists my face. Now the sun is bright in the sky, and I'm parched - I could go for a nice, cold fruit drink! I search and search - but I just can't find the punch line!

ELI SCHARF

I am locked up, I sit in a cell all day. I wish to be free, I will be free soon. My plan will start when the sky turns dark. I use my knife to pick the lock, I hide from the guard that will make me stop. I slip in the vent, so light, so quick, the path ahead is dark and slick. I move like none, no sound, no step. A door swings wide, they try to prep. I see I am free, I run, I make it. My heart beats fast, but they won't take it.

ABBY STRAUS

The red ball slid from the boy's hand, hit once, then twice, then off to the street. He ran to it, his small feet hit the ground fast. A car beeped. His mom yelled. His dad's arms pulled him back just in time. His mom held him close, shook. "Do not do that once more," she said. He gave a nod, eyes on the ball, lost for good. On the far side, an old man took it and read the words on its side. He frowned. He had lost this same ball years ago, when he was a kid.

ISLA STRAUS

Luke's mom tells him not to swim too far, but the waves feel good, the sun is warm, and the shore is close. He dives deep, arms strong. When he comes up, the beach is gone. Just blue. He spun, heart fast. No boats. No land. Just sea. A splash. He turned. A boy his age floats near. Pale, with dark eyes. "Lost?" the boy asks. Luke gulps. "Yeah." The boy grins. "Me too." He holds out a hand. Luke takes it. Cold. A wave rolls and Luke is gone. On the beach, his mom calls his name. ■

Wellness Week at UO & YOC

