

SENIOR MISSION FOR ISRAEL

BY CALEV COHEN ('24)



PHOTOS FROM YULA INSTAGRAM

Before setting foot in Israel, my heart was ablaze with anticipation. I had never been to Israel and my ideas came from conjured images from the narratives of others and the stories of my ancestors. Traveling with YULA on this trip allowed me to understand the land and its connection to our Jewish identity while students visit potential yeshivot and seminaries.

Upon our arrival, the reality of Israel instantly set in. The air was crisp; the landscapes vividly painted a picture of an ancient land embracing modernity. But I could tell the usual joy of the land was missing. Our visit to a shiva house was my first encounter with families directly impacted by the October 7th Massacre.

After settling in, the group visited the Kotel and I could really feel the unity of Am Yisrael as Sefardim and Ashkenazim and all the different sects davened together for a swift resolution to the war. As I approached, a magnetic pull drew me in, and time seemed to stand still. There, amidst tears and prayers, I connected with a history that transcended generations, a moment of overwhelming spiritual and emotional significance.

We met soldiers bearing the scars of battle. Their tales of bravery amidst adversity were awe-inspiring. A chance encounter with Itay and Maya Regev, whom I had prayed for, added an unexpected personal dimension to the trip, making the stories of Israel’s resilience all the more real. Hearing the tragedies are one thing, but meeting the people who bear the names for which we have been praying made everything have an added perspective.

Rabbi VelVel Charack in Bnei Brak graciously hosted us and his simple life, yet abundant joy, was a testament to the strength derived from faith. The Panivitzsh yeshiva had such a buzz of energy and learning. It was clear that they were fighting just as hard on the spiritual front lines as their soldier counterparts. Our efforts picking oranges near the Gaza border further connected me to the land because there are so many Mitzvot connected to it.

As the trip drew to a close, each site visited, each story heard, and each face encountered, impacted my understanding of Israel. This journey was more than a physical traverse; it was an odyssey of the soul, unearthing connections to my identity and deepening my appreciation for a land that is both ancient and forever renewing.

In returning home, I carry with me not just memories, but a renewed sense of self, a deeper connection to my heritage, and an indelible bond with the land of Israel.

TO IVY OR NOT TO IVY, THAT IS THE QUESTION

BY BENJI KARBEN ('24)

One question that students should not have to ask themselves when they consider potential colleges is, “Will I be safe?” Unfortunately, ever since the horrific October 7th slaughter in Israel, this question echoes in many Jewish high school seniors’ heads. The Ivy League, composed of eight of the most prestigious universities in the country, excel at one more statistic not listed in national rankings, antisemitism.

Across America, there has been an increase of 330% in antisemitic attacks according to the most recent report by the Anti-Defamation League. To counter the rising wave of antisemitism, Congress held a hearing for the presidents of Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, and MIT to evaluate their responses. Much to the horror of Jewish seniors in the midst of their college applications, each president would not directly answer the questions presented to them and would not affirm that antisemitic actions on their campuses violated their respective university’s policy.

After increasing public pressure, Liz McGill of the University of Pennsylvania and Claudine Gay of Harvard both resigned. In addition, Harvard college received 17% fewer applications in the early admission round from last year, the lowest in four years according to the official Harvard website. Jewish students face two main routes of response: either “move on” and apply pressure through a boycott or keep a Jewish presence with the goal of reforming the corruption from inside the system.

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# TORAH & ISRAEL

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## STUDYING ISRAEL'S BATTLE-SCARRED PAST TO UNDERSTAND ITS WAR-RIDDLED PRESENT

BY SHOSHANA HELFAND ('26)

Both Jews and Muslims have strong religious ties to Israel dating back about 4,000 years to Avraham, or "Ibrahim," who was the father of both religions. In 1000 BCE, King Shaul established the Israel monarchy which continued under King David. The construction of the Beit Hamikdash became part of the Jewish claim to the land of Israel. Since then Israel has been ruled by various groups including Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Egyptians, and many more. The region was renamed "Palestine."

### ENDING THE UPTIC IN ANTISEMITISM ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

BY TAMAR SCHEINFELD ('24)

Antisemitism is on the rise across U.S. college campuses, creating a deeply concerning environment for Jewish students. Recent incidents coupled with heightened tensions surrounding the Israel-Hamas conflict have given rise to a surge in hostility, marked by intimidation, threats, and even physical attacks. According to a recent Anti-Defamation League (ADL) survey, a staggering 73% of Jewish college students have experienced or witnessed antisemitism during the current school year, revealing the distressing reality faced by this community.

This alarming trend has led to a decline in the comfort level of Jewish students in openly expressing their identity on campus. Before October 7, 63.7% felt comfortable doing so, but after the surge in antisemitic incidents, this number plummeted to 38.6%. The urgent need for universities to address this hostile environment is clear, emphasizing the responsibility they bear in ensuring the safety and well-being of all students, regardless of their religious or ethnic backgrounds.

The causes of campus antisemitism often trace back to distorted narratives surrounding the Israel-Hamas conflict. Pro-Palestinian student organizations and individuals, at times, justify terrorism and promote hateful rhetoric against Jewish students, exacerbating tensions. Universities must draw a clear line between free expression and intimidation, holding administrators, faculty members, and students to higher standards to foster an inclusive and respectful environment.

Efforts to combat antisemitism should be part of broader initiatives promoting inclusivity and protecting all minority groups on campus. Universities should adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, providing a comprehensive framework for recognizing and addressing anti-Jewish hate. Additionally, campuses must actively build coalitions and support networks, fostering solidarity among students, faculty, alumni, staff, and parents. It is the moral responsibility of universities to counter all forms of hate and discrimination, ensuring their campuses remain safe and inclusive spaces for everyone.

In Europe, Jews faced continued oppression and persecution. In the 1880s, Jews migrated back to Ottoman controlled Palestine. By 1914, there were more than 75,000 Jews in the area. After World War I, Britain took control of Palestine and Jordan from the Ottomans. In 1922, the League of Nations approved Britain's declaration that promised Palestine as a national home for the Jewish people.

After World War II, the United Nations split Palestine into two countries: the Jewish state of Israel and the Arab state of Palestine. Israel agreed to the partition, but the Arab side refused to accept it. Israel was declared a state on May 14, 1948. Immediately, the Arab League attacked Israel. Israel won the War of Independence. Egypt took control of the Gaza Strip, and Jordan took control of the West Bank. The original plan for a two-state solution was scrapped. After the war, many Arabs fled from their homes and left for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

In the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel was attacked by neighboring Arab countries. Israel won the war and claimed the Gaza Strip, the Sinai peninsula, the Golan heights, and the West Bank. This war may have only lasted 6 days, but it completely redrew the Middle East.

After the First Intifada, the Oslo accords were signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Palestinians were given the right to self-govern while Israel would control Jerusalem. This led to the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. The historic handshake between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat on the White House lawn in 1993 was a moment of optimism.

However, when Ariel Sharon, a later Israeli prime minister, visited the Temple Mount, the Arabs were offended, and the Second Intifada began. Violent protests, attacks, and suicide bombings broke out. This Intifada lasted five years and removed any hope for peace that may have resulted from the Oslo Accords.

Later, however, Israel's withdrawal from Gaza was another glimmer of hope in the seemingly never-ending conflict. It, once again, demonstrated Israel's commitment to a peaceful resolution and a two-state solution, further seen by how the IDF had to forcibly remove Israeli families from their homes in the area.

In 2006, Hamas was elected as the government over Gaza, and there hasn't been elections since. In 2017, Hamas called for the formation of a Palestinian state without recognizing Israel as a state. Israel refuses. Many countries have suggested a two-state solution, but from history, we see that the reality of this as a solution is unlikely. A peaceful solution has yet to be achieved, and we suffer the consequences today.



PHOTO FROM PEXELS.COM





PHOTOS FROM YULA INSTAGRAM

# DECEMBER 25 YOM IYUN: OUR HEARTS ARE IN THE EAST

BY NAVA GELB ('24)

YULA students filled December 25 with Torah learning on the theme of Israel, allowing much of the general studies faculty to enjoy holiday celebrations. The diverse array of presentations fostered a deeper appreciation for the multifaceted relationship between Torah and Israel's history, culture, and significance.

The day ranged from Mrs. Gans' discussion of "The Promised Land, Delivered: How Sefer Yehoshua Completes Torah," shedding light on the completion of the Torah narrative through the lens of Sefer Yehoshua, to Mrs. Ryzman's heartfelt reflection of "Lessons I Learned from My Brothers," who are currently serving in the Israeli army. Students found inspiration in these real-life stories of individuals dedicating themselves to the defense of Israel.

We also had the special opportunity to hear from our own classmates. Nellie Javaherian ('24) and Tamar Scheinfeld ('24) coordinated a musical kumzitz, "Bilvavi Across Borders: Connection Through Music," providing a joyful backdrop to the day's intellectual discussions. Avital Ives ('24) and Lielle Blinkoff ('24) facilitated discussions about why the term "heart" is used to describe our connection to Israel. Eliana Waghalter ('24) delved into the unique nature of Divrei Hayamim, offering insights into the structure of the sefer and how it represents a sign of hope for Israel's future.

In addition to these intellectual and emotional activities, Mrs. Siegel's art project, "The Mitzvah at the End of the War - an Artistic Perspective," provided a creative outlet for students to process the Israel-Hamas war. This hands-on approach reinforced the idea that the lessons of Torah can appear in various forms, including artistic expression.

This Israel-focused Yom Iyun left students with a sense of enrichment, broadening their perspectives and deepening their connection to the intricate and profound fabric of Jewish heritage and the State of Israel. The shared experiences of the day fostered a sense of unity, creating lasting memories that transcended the classroom setting.

# JOURNEY TO THE HEART: CHRONICLES OF THE IMPACTFUL MISSION TO ISRAEL

BY AVITAL IVES ('24)

Why intentionally travel to the heart of a war zone? Young Israel of Century City (YICC) took members of the shul on their first mission to Israel about a month after the devastation of October 7. I had the unique privilege to join this mission for some of their experiences.

The group met with a wounded soldier at a rehabilitation center. With tears in his eyes, he shared his story and described what he thought were his last moments in this world as he was fighting in Gaza. After being shot in his leg, he recited shema, his last viduy, and thought a lot about his family. What a zechus it was to hear a first hand account from such a hero, to hear a story I don't hear every day, and to witness a true, living miracle.

During our visit to Har Hertzel, we heard from a young widow of a fallen soldier. We heard a little about her husband and their first year of marriage, which had tragically been cut short. The amounts of new graves for fallen soldiers were so difficult to face.

We've all seen the video of the long Shabbos table with empty seats, kiddush cups, and baby bottles located at what is now called "The Hostage Square" in Tel Aviv. But to see this display along with other exhibits in person was deeply impactful. I also had the privilege to hear from the mother of a hostage and the friend of another hostage. As I process my emotions from this mission, I am still awestruck by their words of hope and strength that inspired me to have hope and strength.

Since the tragedy on October 7, Israel has welcomed countless amounts of rabbis, schools, families, and others who are thirsty to contribute to the war effort in whatever way possible. I am so fortunate to have been given the opportunity to take part in Israel's war effort by showing the civilians, soldiers, and hostage families that we will go above and beyond to reveal our love and support for Israel. Am Yisrael Chai!



PHOTO BY AVITAL IVES ('24)

## The Panther Post

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# THE CLASSIC SUGAR COOKIE

BY TAMAR SCHEINFELD (‘24)

Simple yet delicious, you can take a bite out of one of these treats after about just 15 minutes. Elevate your sugar cookies with optional icing for a burst of color and creativity. Share the joy of these cookies with friends and family. Most of all, enjoy!

**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup (2 sticks) of softened unsalted butter or margarine
- 1 ½ cup confectioner’s sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract
- 2 ¾ cup flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt

**Directions:**

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Mix together the softened butter/margarine and confectioner’s sugar.
3. Crack the egg into a separate bowl. Mix in the vanilla extract.
4. Add the egg-vanilla extract mixture into the butter/margarine sugar mixture. Mix until the egg is fully incorporated.
5. In a separate bowl, mix the flour, baking powder, and salt together.
6. Add the dry mixture little by little into the wet ingredients.
7. Mix until dough is fully formed.
8. Roll the dough out on parchment paper, use flour for dusting as necessary.
9. Cut and bake at 400° for 8-9 minutes or until golden brown.



PHOTO FROM PEXELS.COM

# RESPONDING TO PRO-PALESTINE COMMENTS

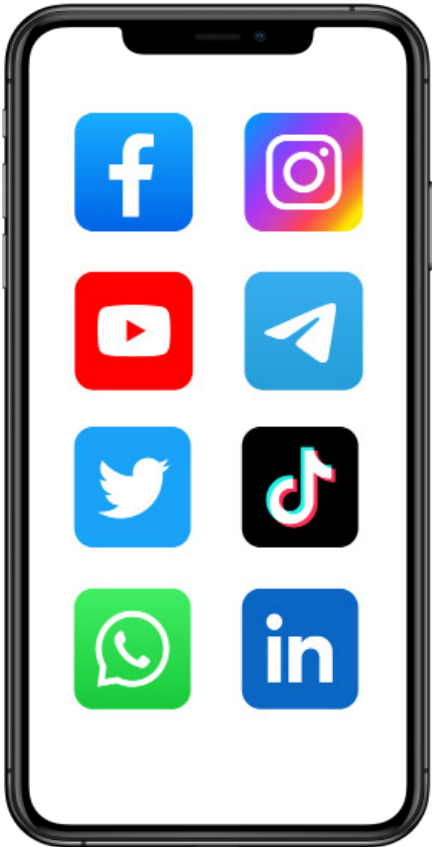
BY ELLIE MENDELSON (‘24)

**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup Zionism
- 2 cups Respect
- 4 tsp Jewish Pride
- 6 tbsp Active Listening
- A pinch of Good Spirited Discussion

**Directions:**

1. Start with a pinch of Good Spirited Discussion  
Note: If this is not added, the discussion will burn in the oven
2. Add Respect and Active Listening to a large bowl and mix until your hands are fully coated  
Note: Discussion will cook faster if some spills on the other person as well as yourself
3. Coat the mixture Jewish Pride and Zionism
4. Mix thoroughly and pour into a 57x84 mm pan
5. Bake at 613° for 75 minutes and enjoy!



GRAPHIC BY LIELLE BLINKOFF (‘24)

## TO IVY OR NOT TO IVY, THAT IS THE QUESTION

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William Daroff, CEO of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish American Organizations, told The Jerusalem Post, “Jews ‘can and should’ move on from Ivy League universities.” Proponents of this approach highlight the failure of these universities to accommodate for a diversity of perspectives: Ivy League schools pride themselves on being safe spaces for deliberating ideas, but anti-Israel viewpoints overpower many campus discussions and students who support Israel are now labeled as “colonial oppressors.” The Israel-Palestinian conflict is one of the most complex issues in modern politics, so conversations about it should be filled with nuance, not filled with false dichotomies. Disappointingly, the hallowed halls of the Ivy League have become echo chambers for particular viewpoints.

“Moving on,” though, has a major downside: the voices in those echo chambers will only get louder without a Jewish presence to counter them. So Jewish students who are still applying to secular colleges have to be prepared to advocate for Israel and fight on the front lines against antisemitism. YULA graduates, for example, can counter prevalent misinformation with their knowledge from classes like “Judaism Through the Ages” and seek support from faculty members like Rabbi Dr. Menachem Hecht, our Director of Israel Education, who is familiar with the secular school landscape from his own experience at NYU.

Students should confer with their parents, Rebbeim, and teachers before deciding whether to attend a secular college because, in a post-October 7th society, that decision not only influences their own future, but also the future of the Jewish people. Whether YULA students commit to Yeshiva University or the Ivy League, though, they have the opportunity and responsibility to impact the world in a positive way, to become the Israel advocates that the world of education so desperately needs. Am Yisrael Chai!

## FROM YULA TO SEMINARY

BY AVITAL IVES (‘24)

After four years of embodying “Primacy and Relevancy of Torah,” YULA seniors on the girls’ campus have now delved into seminary mode. Although applying to seminary may seem like a daunting process at first, our amazing Israel Guidance Counselor, Mrs. Hershoff, has made this process go smoothly, ensuring that every girl feels confident with her options.

Now that seminary candidates have submitted their autobiographical sketches, an essay reflecting the student’s values, and a detailed outline of the student’s extracurricular involvement, they can begin to focus on their personal growth and bucket lists for their upcoming year in Israel.

“Completing the seminary application has made me extremely excited for the Israel experience,” says Eliana Waghalter (‘24). Now, the YULA seniors will be ready to embark on the next chapter of their educational and spiritual journeys.



PHOTO FROM YULA INSTAGRAM

## AI REVOLUTIONIZES FINALS PREP AT YULA

BY ELI GOEL (‘25)

During the final exam season, students feel tremendously pressured to excel. YULA students have historically relied on office hours, study guides, or packets full of notes to prepare for finals, but now AI has come into play. Its benefits are championed by Aiden Drake (‘25), who says, “AI has helped me understand the math that I am learning [by] explaining the math problem step by step and answering all my questions.” The novel technology has its flaws and sometimes gives inaccurate information, but it functionally gives students 24-hour access to a personalized tutor.

Students at the boys’ campus have only positive feedback about AI’s ability to help them prepare for exams, especially those who need to balance their academics with sports. Alex Gabbay (‘25), captain of the varsity basketball team, constantly leaves school early for games and spends late nights practicing. For him, AI is essential; he reflected, “Not only has AI helped me learn the material that I have to know, but it has also helped me construct a study plan to ensure I use my time in the most efficient way.” David Goel (‘26), captain of the Frosh-Soph basketball team, similarly says, “As a student-athlete, I miss classes. It’s just part of the responsibility of being a part of a team. Thankfully, I have AI to explain the information that I missed in class.”

Students must be careful not to totally rely on AI, though, since they still have to master content well enough to take exams without its help. Neither ChatGPT nor Bard are permitted under YULA’s Honor Code, so students should balance any chunk of time they study online with a chunk of study time offline. Study Maimonides and remember to find the golden mean.



## BEYOND BAMBOO: HOW CHINA’S FURRY AMBASSADORS IMPACT FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BY NAVA GELB (‘24)

When pandas come to mind, the image typically evokes thoughts of large, adorable creatures munching on bamboo rather than foreign relations and the United States/China conflict. Yet, as seen through recent events, pandas represent exactly that: politics.

The National Zoo in Washington D.C. prepared to send off three pandas—Mei Xiang, Tian Tian, and Xiao Qi Ji. Zoo Atlanta would stand as the only remaining institution in the US housing pandas, but their permit is set to expire in the upcoming year. This potential absence of pandas in the US would mark the first time since 1972, a span of over fifty years, and has been described by Laurie Thompson, the National Zoo’s assistant curator of pandas, as “heartbreaking.”

China started “panda diplomacy” in 1941, gifting or leasing pandas to other nations, including Russia, symbolizing growing friendships and alliances. China, under President Xi’s leadership, has also withdrawn pandas from countries like England and Australia. Pandas, being a unique Chinese commodity, are strategically employed by the government to both establish and sever alliances.

Chee Meng Tan, a professor at Nottingham University Business School’s Malaysia



campus who specializes in panda diplomacy, emphasizes pandas’ symbolic role as “friendship between China and the rest of the world.”

Following a recent meeting between Presidents Xi and Biden in San Francisco, a surprising turn of events occurred. President Xi, characterizing the pandas as “envoys of friendship between the Chinese and American peoples,” decided to send more pandas to the United States. This indicates that while Xi didn’t entirely withdraw all pandas from the United

States, the mere threat was sufficient to unsettle the nation—a symbolic representation of a broader leverage that he could potentially wield against the United States.

Tensions between these two powerhouse countries continue to grow, but the pandas’ presence are a sign of mutual respect between the Presidents. The Pandas aren’t just a sight at the zoo; they are the bridge of diplomacy in an ever-rising hostile political climate.

## HOW INVOLVED SHOULD THE UN BE IN THE ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT?

BY KAYLA NOURMAND (‘24)

The United Nations (UN) has been at the forefront of efforts to foster peace, security, and cooperation among nations since 1945, when it put forth the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that outlines the fundamental rights and freedoms to which every individual is entitled. Its function is to work tirelessly to protect and advance these rights by advocating for equality, justice, and dignity for people everywhere. In the current Israel-Hamas war, though, to what extent is the UN doing what it is supposed to do?

After witnessing the devastating consequences of the Israel-Hamas war, the UN should have played a crucial role in stopping misinformation and helping Israeli civilians promote human rights. UN Secretary-General António Guterres, though, vehemently stated on October 11th that “UN premises and all hospitals, schools and clinics must never be targeted,” refusing to see the picture that includes the terrorists inside these buildings and the weapons they have stored there. The UN’s incomplete picture tacitly allows Hamas to stay in existence and to prolong its terrorism, which is one reason why the United States stood apart from fellow members of the Security Council in December to veto the call for a cease-fire.

In the same October 11th statement, Guterres also advocated that “crucial life-saving supplies – including fuel, food and water – must be allowed into Gaza. [The UN] need[s] rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access now.” As for the Gazan civilians, of course they should have aid. They are people and deserve to be kept alive. But what about the people of Israel? What about the thousands of Israeli families displaced from their homes or torn apart because a father or brother is in the army? “[Calling] for the immediate release of all Israeli hostages held in Gaza” is not enough; weighing Guterres’s rhetoric about Gaza versus his rhetoric about Israel, the latter is clearly empty.

In November, the UN Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs (OCHA) planned to “scale up humanitarian operations in support of 2.2 million people in the Gaza Strip and 500,000 of the most vulnerable in the West Bank” to the tune of \$1.2 billion. OCHA’s aid to Gaza and the West Bank totaled \$1.25 billion by the end of 2023, according to its Financial Tracking Service, and OCHA sent another \$99 million in the first two weeks of 2024. Although this solution has humanitarian intentions, it fails to address the root cause of the conflict: Hamas. The wound of October 7th is festering under this financial band-aid. To prevent the atrocities of October 7th from being repeated and to create a land of peace and unity for Gaza’s 2.2 million residents, decisive political action is needed now—decisive action that, perhaps, is beyond the power of the UN, and beyond the power of the dollar.



# INTERNATIONAL QUAKES RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT “THE BIG ONE”

BY BARUCH MENDELOWITZ ('24)



On September 8th, an earthquake in the Moroccan Atlas Mountains, 43 miles from the city of Marrakesh, took the world by surprise with its devastating 6.8 magnitude and deadly power. The quake caused 2900 deaths, 5500 injuries, and about 10 billion dollars worth of damage, which is equivalent to 8% of Morocco’s GDP. Marrakesh took the brunt of the earthquake’s strike with effects being felt all the way to Casablanca, 150 miles away.

Morocco has had no notable earthquakes, so it seems the stress along its plates had built up for some time. In Morocco, earthquakes result from the release of energy when tectonic plates, previously jammed together due to friction, overcome this resistance and generate seismic waves, leading to shaking sensations. Scientists call the Moroccan earthquake a reverse fault, which means that the tectonic plates collide and cause the Earth’s crust to thicken. This collision causes an intense amount of stress on the plates, and induces earthquakes as the land seeks to shift to release the built up stress. If the stress on the tectonic plates is not periodically released by small earthquakes, then it will continue to build up for an inestimable amount of time until it finally releases itself in a big way. Unfortunately, scientists are unable to gauge seismic pressure, so humanity remains in the dark as to when another decimating earthquake will strike.

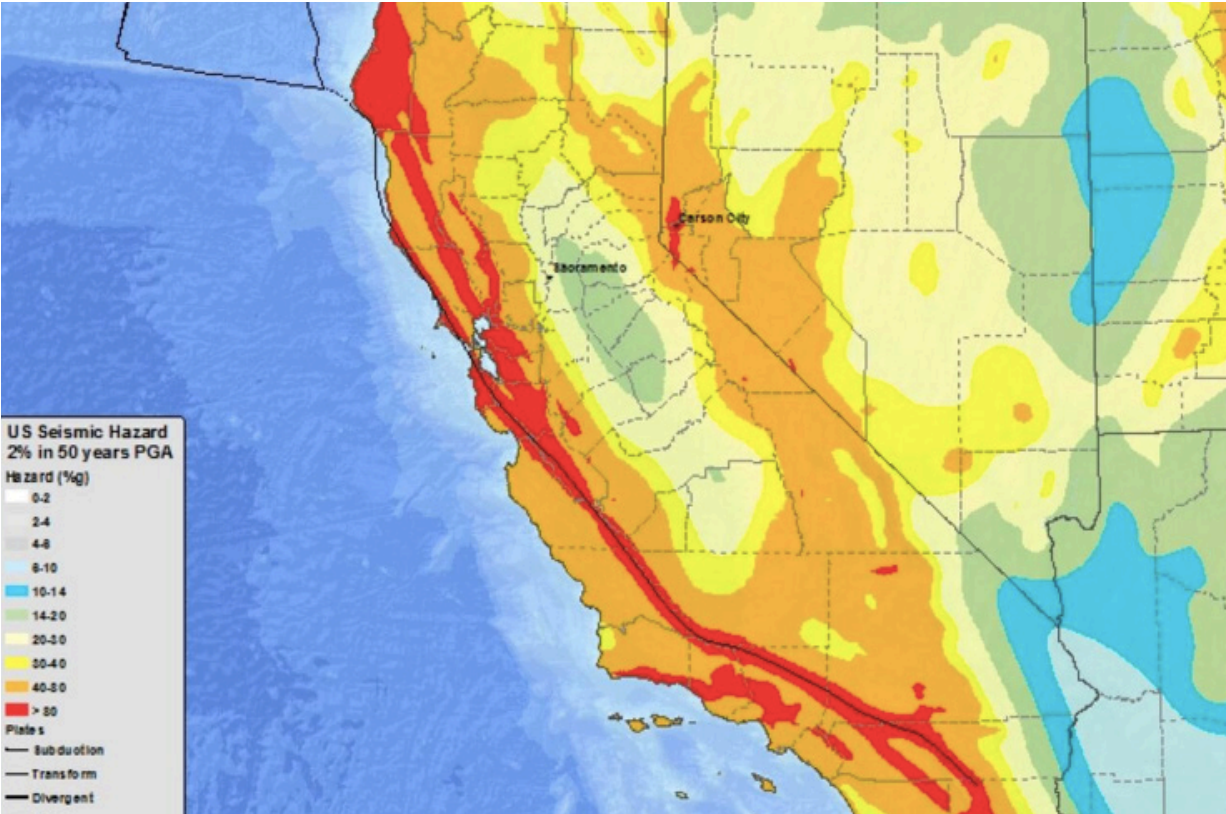
The magnitude of Morocco’s earthquake begs the question of whether Los Angeles can withstand a catastrophic earthquake such as the one in Morocco. LA has had a history of earthquakes in the past, such as the 6.6 magnitude earthquake in 1971 as well as the 6.7 magnitude earthquake in 1994. LA encounters these quakes because it sits just 60 miles off the San Andreas Fault, the meeting point for the North American and Pacific tectonic plates. The proximity to the Fault makes earthquakes an ever present threat to Los Angeles residents, with the most recent earthquake recorded as a 5.1 in nearby Ojai. Just as Marrakesh was built from adobe and brick buildings, so was much of East LA due to the style of the period. As seen in Marrakesh, these buildings prove brittle during earthquakes and susceptible to collapse almost instantaneously. California has recognized the real risk these buildings pose to their residents and has worked to demolish or retrofit the structures to address their inadequacies. Unfortunately, the government has been unable to enforce its recommendations in areas of East LA county, such as Riverside and San Bernardino, and

this could lead to huge ramifications if a similarly large earthquake to the one in Morocco should strike Los Angeles.

Even more worrisome is the fact that these retrofittings of buildings were done under the assumption that steel would be an adequate way to reinforce building structure due to its ductility. This assumption was prevalent during the 1970-90s, periods of intense growth and development of Los Angeles. After the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, many of these steel reinforced structures, called WSMF, suffered severe damage, such as the famous ARCO Towers in Downtown LA. These 52 story buildings sustained large cracks in their foundations, and were lucky to have not collapsed during the quake. However, the towers were fixed with the same sort of steel, WSMF, that proved ineffective during the earthquake, which seems to be a recipe for disaster. Simulations were done by a former Caltech engineer, Swaminathan Krishnan, who found that if a 7.9 magnitude earthquake, identical to one that struck in 1857, were to strike LA today, then a whopping 5 WSMF supported buildings would collapse in LA. The amount of injury and death that could cause is unimaginable, and it makes a person question whether any building in LA is truly safe.

It seems that the expensive nature of the undertaking to inspect LA’s buildings will delay or eliminate the possibility that they will be inspected for earthquake vulnerability. Dozens

of steel connections occur on each floor of a building. These all support the building against earthquakes, but they prove costly to inspect and replace. To secure just one of these connections would cost \$50,000, and the cost of a 52 story building like the ARCO Towers would be dramatically high. The owners of the ARCO Towers were questioned whether they had looked into the structural integrity of their buildings after they patched the crack in the foundation, and they declined to answer. This seems to indicate they in fact did nothing to ensure the building’s safety. If this is the case, then think about the other buildings in LA that were not in the public’s eye like the ARCO Towers. What would make those building owners spend all this money to inspect their property if they had no pressure to do so? This seems to be the sad plight of the city of Los Angeles: it is impossible to be 100% safe against a significant earthquake such as the one in Morocco. At least we know as city dwellers, that the steel reinforced structures offer more protection than the buildings of Marrakesh, but unfortunately, we remain vulnerable to a high magnitude earthquake should it hit our city.





# PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

BY NAOMI TOUBIAN ('24) AND EDEN CASTEL ('26)

Chanukah is an outlet to share our love with our family, friends and teachers. However, it is hard not to think about the suffering going on in our real home, Israel. Inside of each Jew, there is a fire burning to help our brothers and sisters fighting for their lives in Israel. We must volunteer, donate supplies, and say tehillim for the current predicament in Israel. We must also bring the light of Chanukah with us throughout the entire year and utilize this strength to daven for our family in Israel. So, as each of us take on this responsibility we should always remember Am Yisroel Chai and we hope you had a de-LIGHT-ful Chanukah.

**Students captured the essence of light breaking through darkness, using the prompt: "Chanukah Light Leading us Through a Challenging Period in Israel."**

Winner: Nellie Javaherian ('24)



## LAKERS REIGN SUPREME: A TRIUMPH IN THE NBA IN-SEASON TOURNAMENT

BY TAMAR SCHEINFELD ('24)

The NBA In-Season Tournament, introduced for the 2023-24 season, has undeniably transformed the landscape of professional basketball, creating a riveting spectacle for fans and players alike. The tournament's innovative format comprises two stages: Group Play and the Knockout Rounds. Within the fiercely competitive West Group B, the Los Angeles Lakers navigated a challenging path, facing off against basketball powerhouses like the Golden State Warriors, the New Orleans Pelicans, the Minnesota Timberwolves, and the Utah Jazz during the Group Play stage. This early phase laid the groundwork for the Lakers' dominance, setting the stage for their impressive journey through the tournament.

In the subsequent Knockout Rounds, the Lakers exhibited their championship pedigree in a quarter-final clash against the Phoenix Suns, showcasing both prowess and resilience. The semifinals against the New Orleans Pelicans further solidified the Lakers' place in the tournament's history, leading to a monumental championship showdown. As the Lakers advanced, the tournament's impact on the league became increasingly evident. Viewership records were shattered, with millions tuning in to witness the Lakers' captivating journey, thereby bolstering the league's negotiating power for future TV contracts.

Beyond the on-court triumphs, the In-Season Tournament brought

additional excitement with substantial rewards for the participating teams. The players on the winning team, in this case, the Lakers, were set to receive a significant financial incentive of \$500,000 each. This substantial reward not only recognizes their athletic prowess but also adds a thrilling dimension to the competition, intensifying the players' dedication to securing victory. For the runners-up, the reward was still substantial at \$200,000 per player, highlighting the significance of reaching the Championship game. The financial rewards extended further, with the players who lost in the Semifinals earning \$100,000 each, and those in the Quarterfinals receiving \$50,000 per player. These monetary incentives

not only serve as a testament to the players' hard work and commitment but also add an extra layer of intensity and pressure to each stage of the tournament.

As the NBA In-Season Tournament continues to evolve, the Lakers' triumph in its inaugural season not only solidifies their standing in the league but also sets the stage for future competitions that promise both athletic excellence and substantial rewards for the participating teams. In the pursuit of the NBA Cup, the Lakers have left an indelible mark on the captivating narrative of the tournament.



The Panther Post is the official student newspaper of YULA High School, which has 450 students and 85 faculty and staff members. The Panther Post's mission is to examine and report news and community events, while also creating an open space for students to express their beliefs. We ensure that articles are written with accuracy, integrity, and respect. The Panther Post prints 500 copies of each issue, which are distributed around campus and the greater Los Angeles community.

The paper is a forum for differing views and welcomes comments from its readers in the form of Letters to the Editor, which should be 150 words or less and sent to our faculty advisor: [msteinborn@yula.org](mailto:msteinborn@yula.org). No anonymous letters are printed. The Panther Post reserves the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.