

## Yom Haatzmaut events on the UWS

*(The programs listed below are not part of the UWS Celebrates Israel)*

More info on FaceBook: [HaShuk; Israel Themed events on the UWS](#)

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[Dialogue and Transformation –  
Photography Exhibit of Israeli Settler and Palestinian Women](#)

Monday, April 9 through June 15 | During community house opening hours |  
At B'nai Jeshurun Community House (270 west 89<sup>th</sup> street)

(Free, for Adults + Teens)

During the past two summers, photographer Saskia Bory Keeley partnered with [Roots](#), an initiative now in its fourth year led by a Palestinian and Israeli settler committee who works at the heart of the conflict in the West Bank. Keeley conducted photo workshops exclusively for women who would otherwise have no contact with each other. Developing photographic skills was an important aspect of the program and just as essential was the opportunity for women “from the other side” to interact in a safe setting—many for the very first time in their lives. The photos presented in this exhibit are a sample of chosen works created by these talented women, providing us with an insight into their own world, their home and family, and their view of the conflict.

**Saskia will narrate the exhibit in a special session to take place as part of our annual Israeli Independence Day ceremony on April 18.** All proceeds from the sale of photos, books, and presentations benefit the Roots’ photo workshops.

[Saskia Bory Keeley](#) is a Swiss photographer. She was educated at Geneva University, Sotheby’s and the New Academy for Art Studies in London. She also received training at the International Center for Photography. Keeley mostly partners with humanitarian organizations, taking into account their sensitive and noble endeavors. Her latest work has taken her to India (with Leaders’ Quest), to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (with the END Fund/ Amani Global Works), to the West Bank (with both Roots and Taghyeer), and to Jordan (with We Love Reading).

[Overcoming Israel's Key Social Challenges with Major General Nimrod Sheffer](#)

Saturday, April 14 After Shabbat services |  
At B'nai Jeshurun Community House (270 west 89<sup>th</sup> street)

(Free, for Adults)

After kiddush, come down and meet Major General (Res.) Nimrod Sheffer, the former head of the Israel Defense Forces Planning Directorate (J5), where he was responsible for military strategy and international military cooperation.

Over the course of his 36 years of service in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), Sheffer served as a fighter pilot, commanded an Air Force base, and headed the Air Operations Division and the Israeli Air Force Headquarters. He holds a B.A.S. in Geophysics and Planetary Sciences from Tel Aviv University and a M.A. in Public Administration from Harvard University. Upon retiring from the IDF, Nimrod decided to dedicate his time to help Israeli society face the social, racial, and economical challenges it faces from within, by becoming a co-chair of the Desert Stars Leadership Village, an organization focused on developing a new generation of Bedouin leaders to transform the Bedouin community and the wider Negev as a whole.

## [CELEBRATE ISRAEL SHABBAT: IsraAID](#)

April 14, 10:00am | At West End Synagogue (190 Amsterdam Avenue)

(Free, for Adults)

Toumai Kafri, the NY representative from IsraAID will address the work of this non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to providing life-saving disaster relief and long-term support. For over a decade, their teams of professional medics, search & rescue squads, post-trauma experts and community mobilizers, have been first on the front lines of nearly every major humanitarian response in the 21st century. It will give congregants an opportunity to understand the humanitarian work of Israelis as they seek to address victims of suffering around the world.

## [An Up-Close Encounter with Desert Stars — New Hope for Israel's Most Marginalized Community](#)

Monday, April 16 | 7:00-8:30PM | Location upon registration

(Free, for Adults)

The Bedouin are currently at the bottom of every socioeconomic measure in Israel, including measures of employment and educational attainment. A staggering 29% of young Bedouin drop out of high school and a mere 8.7% of young Bedouin begin studies in higher education. Unemployment is high as only 22% of Bedouin women and 60% of Bedouin men hold jobs. The widening socio-economic gap between Bedouin and other Israelis engenders frustration and despair, further alienating the Bedouin community.

Join us to learn more about the challenges facing this community, but even more importantly—to meet Major General Nimrod Sheffer and Matan Yaffe of Desert Stars, an organization dedicated to raising a new generation of Bedouin leaders to transform their community and the wider Negev as a whole.

**Major General Nimrod Sheffer** is a Desert Stars board member and co-chair of the Desert Stars Leadership Village. Sheffer is the former head of the Israel Defense Forces Planning Directorate (J5), where he was responsible for military strategy and international military cooperation. Over the course of his 36 years of service in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), Sheffer served as a fighter pilot, commanded an Air Force base, and headed the Air Operations Division and the Israeli Air Force Headquarters. He holds a B.A.S. in Geophysics and Planetary Sciences from Tel Aviv University and a M.A. in Public Administration from Harvard University.

**Matan Yaffe** is Desert Stars' Co-founder and CEO. Established by Yaffe in 2013, Desert Stars is a non-profit organization dedicated to developing a cross-tribal network of Bedouin leaders to advance the Bedouin community of the Negev and Israeli society as a whole. Under Yaffe's leadership, in just five years Desert Stars has grown from a visionary start-up to a large-scale operation that employs over 60 talented and dedicated workers and operates on a budget of over \$5 million—out of which half is governmental. Yaffe is a major in the IDF reserves. While in active duty, he served many roles, which included leading an officer training course and commanding a combat unit for at-risk youth. Mr. Yaffe is a committed entrepreneur with a proven track record of leading social and educational projects.

**Yom Ha'atzmaut Family Shabbat Service and Dinner**  
Friday, April 20 | 5:30PM – 8:30PM |  
At Ansche Chesed (251 W. 100th St., corner of West End Ave)

(For families)

Bring your whole family to an energetic Israel-themed Family Shabbat Service on the Ansche Chesed Roof, followed by an Israeli style Shabbat dinner and Open Gym for the kids. Contact Rabbi Yael at [rabbiyael@anschechesed.org](mailto:rabbiyael@anschechesed.org) to register and for more info.

**ISRAEL' S SURVIVAL: Evolving Internal & External Threats**  
Friday, April 20 | Kabbalat Shabbat at 6:30pm followed by Shabbat Dinner at 7:30pm including presentation | At Congregation Habonim, 103 West End Avenue, New York, NY 10023 (NW Corner 64th/WEA).

(For adults; childcare available)

Howard Stoffer, Associate Professor National Security, Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences at New Haven University will offer a nuanced presentation on Israel at this time in our history. REGISTRATION REQUIRED.

DINNER & CHILDCARE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT [ADMIN@HABONIM.NET](mailto:ADMIN@HABONIM.NET).

**Israeli Folk Dancing for Yom Ha'atzmaut**  
Sunday, April 22 | 2:00-6:00PM |  
At B'nai Jeshurun Community House (270 west 89<sup>th</sup> street)

(Free, for Adults + Teens)

Celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut with the best of Israeli folk dances. Our friendly dancers will help you learn the steps (though a little experience in Israeli folk dancing is helpful!). The program ends with a mix of circle, line, and partner dances, selected mostly by request.

This special event is brought to you by **Rikuday Dor Rishon**, an Upper West Side community-based group dedicated to preserving the classic folk dances of Israel.

Light refreshments will be served.

Please [sign up here](#).

**PREK-2nd GRADE PARTY TO CELEBRATE ISRAEL:**  
**A Mesibat Yisrael for children with parent or caregiver. Siblings welcome!**  
Tuesday, April 24, 5:00-5:45pm | At Congregation Habonim, (103 West End Avenue)

(For Families)

Join Congregation Habonim's K-2nd students to celebrate Israel's 70th Independence Day. Sing, Dance, Snack Israeli Style! RSVP REQUIRED TO [religiousschool@habonim.net](mailto:religiousschool@habonim.net) by Sunday, April 15.

## 70 Years Later: Israel- Utopian Vision, Complicated Reality

Saturday, April 28 | After Shabbat Morning Services |  
At B'nai Jeshurun Community House (270 west 89<sup>th</sup> street)

(Free, for Adults)

70 years have passed since the founders of Israel declared "The State of Israel... will be based on freedom, justice, and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel". But has the Jewish State lived up to this goal, and what means are needed in order to get there? How can a young state facing so many challenges fulfill the Utopian vision of the prophets of Israel, if at all? Join Rabbi Tamir Nir, head of the BINA Secular Yeshiva in Tel

Aviv, as he explores these questions, examining contemporary issues in Israeli society today through the lens of classic and modern Jewish texts.

**Rabbi Tamir Nir** is a renowned Israeli leader and educator who currently serves as Director of the Tel Aviv Secular Yeshiva of BINA: The Jewish Movement for Social Change. Tamir is also founder and rabbi of the Achva B'Kerem community in Beit Hakerem, chairman of the Heschel Center for Sustainability, Jerusalem City Council Member, and former Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem. His educational work and leadership focuses on the intersection of Judaism, community-building and environmental sustainability. Tamir holds degrees in Jewish Education, Architecture and Urban Planning, as well as Rabbinic Ordination from HUC-JIR in Jerusalem. He lives in Beit Hakerem with his wife and three children.