



The 2025 Activity Report

The MATANEL Forum for the Future

Prepared by Rabbi Dr. Ido. Pachter

Description of Activities:

The Concept of Victory

During 2025, the MATANEL Forum of the MOED Initiative led a quality research group on the topic of "The Concept of Victory." The group included approximately 15 fellows and experts from various disciplines - military and security, politics and government, political science, media, Bible studies, and more. The group met for approximately 8 sessions, each two hours long, over about three months, during which the concept of victory was examined from various and diverse perspectives. At the end of the process, an executive summary was formulated and distributed to group members for comments. We are currently finalizing the final document, which will be published and distributed to government and security officials.

The Education Task Force

Another group that was formed focused on education. In preparation for convening this group, we commissioned qualitative research on the education system in Israel, which sharpened the research question and identified the central challenges underlying the operation of the state education system in Israel. The document was discussed by a small expert group that developed the central themes on the subject. Activity of the expanded research group is planned for April 2026.

Preparatory work for an additional group was done on the topic of the relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jewry. For this purpose, we conducted expert consultation conversations in Israel and abroad. The group's activity is planned for June 2026.

The Spirit of the IDF

In parallel with these groups, individual research work was conducted by our experts on the "Spirit of the IDF," following challenges to IDF values during the war, as well as on "The New Israeli Story"—an operational program for the State of Israel after the war. These works are in advanced stages.

During the year, we published several opinion pieces and responses on behalf of the Forum regarding matters that arose in the media related to the Forum's activities.

Position Papers

- **Executive summary on the concept of victory**, including in-depth analysis of the concept from various perspectives (semantic, military, strategic, and supra-strategic), with reference to current events, was issued after the joint forum completed its work. The summary received expert comments from Dr. Eyal Hulata (former Head of the National Security Council),





Brigadier General Eran Ortal, Dr. Neta Gal-Noor, and others. The group's summary document will be completed soon and will be published publicly and submitted to decision-makers.

- **Report on the education crisis in the State of Israel** was presented to experts in formal and informal education—Moshe Ben Atar and Mr. Kobi Amar—and served as the basis for joint discussion to formulate recommendations for reforming the education system in the State of Israel.
- **Report on the relationship with Diaspora Jewry**, which will serve as the basis for discussion in a dedicated research group, was prepared following a series of meetings with Prof. Adam Ferziger.
- **Report on "Spirit of the IDF"**—background and interpretation—was prepared by Brigadier General (Res.) Eli Shermeister, former Chief Education Officer, and is being edited for publication.

The publications have not yet received recognition from government officials. We will dedicate work to this in 2026.

Media Publication – Opinion Pieces

- An article on the Spirit of the IDF and the importance of formulating an ethical code was published on August 21 in the religious-conservative newspaper *Besheva*. The summary and content of this article is included in the attachment “A Debate on Ethics and Military Values.”
- An article on Haredi conscription and reserve service, including a practical proposal, was published on October 30 on the *Srugim* website.
- A series of articles on the meaning of victory was published in the popular Shabbat newsletter *Shabaton*.

The Beit Midrash – MATANEL Forum for the Future

The Beit Midrash brought together exceptional post-military Israeli leaders from across the full spectrum of Israeli society for deep engagement with fundamental questions of Jewish sovereignty, identity, values, and national purpose.

The foundation year required substantial investment in building the intellectual and operational infrastructure for a program of this ambition. We developed a comprehensive curriculum addressing the intersection of Jewish tradition, democratic values, and the unique responsibilities of sovereignty. The program's guiding theme, *'To Be a Free People': Jewish Sovereignty - Meaning, Responsibility, and Values*, reflects our conviction that meaningful change begins one person at a time.

The curriculum encompassed nine in-person sessions and nine supplementary Zoom sessions. In-person session themes include: Theology of Sovereignty; Judaism as Religion, Nation, Culture, and Civilization; Autonomy; Particularism and Universalism; Philosophy of Responsibility; Sanctification; Leadership Challenges; Dealing with Uncertainty; and Israeli Halakha.



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The program was led by Rabbi Dr. Ido Pachter in collaboration with Professor Benjamin Ish-Shalom, Beit Morasha's founding president, and Rabbi Dr. Yamin Levy of the Maimonides Heritage Fund - ensuring the highest caliber of scholarly leadership and pedagogical excellence.

Fellow Recruitment and Selection

A rigorous competitive application process, including interviews, yielded an extraordinary inaugural cohort of 14 fellows aged 22-30 representing the full diversity of Israeli society. Our fellows come from Modern Orthodox, Haredi, Conservative, and secular backgrounds; from Ethiopian, Sephardic, Ashkenazi, Yemenite, and Russian communities; and from geographic locations spanning Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Herzliya, Bnei Brak, Lod, Rishon LeZion, the Galilee, and Gush Etzion. (See Appendix: 2025-26 Fellows for complete profiles.)

The cohort includes graduate students in law, social work, computer science, and Bible studies; young professionals working in government, law, and public relations; clinical social workers; film students; podcasters; and social activists - united by their strong commitment to the Jewish community, dedication to the State of Israel, and passion for Jewish continuity. This diversity is not incidental but essential to the program's mission: creating a shared space where different perspectives can engage in genuine dialogue and collaborative thinking about Israel's future.

Program Sessions and Learning Format

The Beit Midrash combines monthly in-person sessions (4:00-8:00 PM) with supplementary online sessions (7:00-9:00 PM). In-person sessions integrate traditional Beit Midrash methodology - *chavruta* (paired study), textual analysis, full group sessions, and frontal lectures - with contemporary academic perspectives and practical application.

Zoom session topics address contemporary challenges including: The Deep Divide at Home: Reasons and Responses; A Medieval Voice for the 21st Century?; The Sanctity of Life and Human Dignity; Values-Based Leadership; Voice of Reason in Unreasonable Politics; *BeTzelem Elokim*: Understanding a Jewish Core Value; and The Many Faces of 21st-Century Jewry. Sessions to date have fostered remarkably candid and productive dialogue across ideological and cultural boundaries.

Final Projects and Program Conclusion

Each fellow is completing a sovereignty-related project, ensuring that the program's impact extends beyond individual development to contribute meaningful analysis of Israel's most pressing challenges. The program will conclude with a closing conference and celebration on Israeli Independence Day 2026.



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Participant Testimonials

Yotam Halperin: I had the privilege of taking part in a meaningful discussion at the MOED Forum. The discussion developed following research on the current education system, which showed that in the State of Israel today, the education system functions as almost separate education systems, receiving different budgets and operating under completely different supervision—to the point of non-existent. Following the research, an important discussion developed among forum members in the group designated for this topic.

One of the questions that arose dealt with a fundamental issue: should we aim to change the content taught in the system, hoping to create a shared ethos, or would it be more appropriate to try to influence the tools available to the system and its structure, so that change would occur naturally.

Dr. Neta Gal-Noor: The group that formed around the concept of victory created a deep, multi-layered, interesting, and instructive discussion space. In each meeting, we were exposed to different aspects of the concept of victory, to different and interesting prisms that led to rich and broad intellectual discussion. The choice of participants from different disciplines was very successful and created the richness of discussion that ultimately enabled the distillation of organized thinking and, hopefully, a contribution to an important and necessary discussion at this time in the State of Israel after October 7th.

Hagar Diler, Student and Activist in the Jewish World: I am proud to be part of the MOED – MATANEL Forum Beit Midrash, which serves for me as a learning, developmental, and thinking incubator in an era when stimuli minimize as much as possible the ability to exercise the brain muscle. In this program, they teach us "how to think" and not just "what to think." They challenge us with perspectives different from our own, deepen interpretations, and introduce new ones. So after trying to summarize how much they enrich our intellectual level, it is equally important to say how much they believe in us and are invested in our process so that we fulfill our responsibility to society and the Jewish people in our dear land and in the Diaspora. We read and discuss texts, go out for interesting *chevrutot* [paired study], and finish meetings with a collaborative workshop in the magical place of our group in Jerusalem. Every part is precise, in the right place and at the right time to undergo the optimal process.

Ziv Gilinski, Ministry of Finance: I came to the MOED – MATANEL Forum Beit Midrash a few months after I returned to Israel. I was reflecting on my social and spiritual life when suddenly an advertisement for a Beit Midrash popped up. How good that I chose to apply to the program. I was privileged to enter the gates of the Beit Midrash with the pleasant and fascinating Professor Ish-Shalom and Rabbi Dr. Ido Pachter, who enriches us with additional content and ensures an organized schedule. Above all, I benefit from meeting new friends my age, people of thought and action at the beginning of their journey, who help me navigate my path in the world as a person, as a Jew, as an Israeli, and as a public servant.



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Dr. Eyal Hulata, Former Head of the National Security Council, Victory Group: The State of Israel has been grappling since its establishment, and even more so since October 7th, with defining the concept of victory. Ostensibly, at the end of a war, it should be clear—who won and who lost? But in practice, and especially against terrorist organizations operating in a different ideological world, we struggle to achieve military victory and certainly struggle to come out on top politically and in terms of consciousness. The work led by Beit Morasha attempts to address this complexity and propose new ideas that will help deal with the issue, and I am glad to take part in this important work.



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