SESSION 1

IN BLESSED MEMORY OF BEN SHIMONI

The Michael and Andrea Leven Family Foundation

LEGACIES INITIATIVE

OLAMI MENTORSHIP

BEN

On October 7th, Ben Shimoni, 31 was at the Nova Music Festival when all hell broke loose. Amid the hail of rockets and gunfire Ben helped five women near him get into his car and miraculously delivered them to safety in nearby Beer Sheva.

Ben then announced that he was returning to the festival site to try to rescue others. The women pleaded with him not to risk his life, yet despite their pleas, he got into his car and returned to the site of the festival.

He successfully rescued eight more people including one of Olami Israel's students Tomer Veiner.

Ben was still not satisfied and he returned again to the Nova site where he managed to get three people into his car, but as he tried to drive away, Hamas terrorists wearing Israeli army uniforms fired at his car and murdered Ben.

Ben's girlfriend, Jessica, shared that "everyone who talked to him that morning begged him not to go back, but despite his brother, father and her pleading, "he went back to the inferno, and then went back again."

Ben's parents Rafi & Peninah dreamed and prayed for the miracle of parenthood for over 12 years. Finally their prayers were answered with the birth of a baby boy who thay named Binyamin or Ben for short.

Rafi and Peninah raised Ben in the beautiful Gush Katif, near the sea—a place that was once part of Israel before it was handed over to the Palestinians. Tragically, this same area is now home to the Hamas terrorists responsible for Ben's murder.

Ben’s younger brothers, Avinoam and Hai, always looked up to him. He was an amazing big brother who truly loved life. Despite his modest and introverted nature, Ben had a natural presence and was recognized as a leader by those around him.

Ben was a businessman already as a child. He was also a renowned meat chef. Ben was exceptionally bright and multi-talented.

Ben loved to travel or just to hang out...

Ben always lived with the sentiment that life is too short and that he needed to take advantage of every moment.

One of Ben's hobbies was driving and he was a skilled track and race driver.

Ben served in combat reconnaissance in the area surrounding the Gaza Strip and therefore knew the Nova festival area well.

His uncanny driving skills and understanding of the local terrain were a big part of his success in saving so many lives on October 7th.

Ben is survived by his parents, brothers, and girlfriend Jessica.

CHOICES AND DECISIONS

On October 7th, as Ben arrived safely in Beersheva with the five passengers that he had rescued, Ben was faced with a choice to remain in Beersheva and live or to risk his life and return to try and save others. And when he returned safely after yet another trip, again he was faced with a choice to stay and live or to return to save more lives and risk his own. Ben chose others over himself time and time again...

Our life is a series of choices and decisions. We hope that we will always make the right choice.

To perpetuate Ben's legacy, we have chosen to reflect on the power to choose and the impact of choices we make. Ben's girlfriend Jessica shared that the Hebrew words בחר meaning choose and ברח meaning flee have the same letters. Ben chose to return not to flee! Hopefully, spending a few minutes diving into the concept of choice will empower us to choose more carefully and drive us to new levels of success.

THE CONCEPT OF GREATNESS

1. “Some are born great, some achieve greatness, some have greatness thrust upon them”. Do you know the source of this well-known quote?

2. FYI, it was none other than Shakespeare. And while this may be an age-old adage, from a Jewish perspective this is far from accurate.

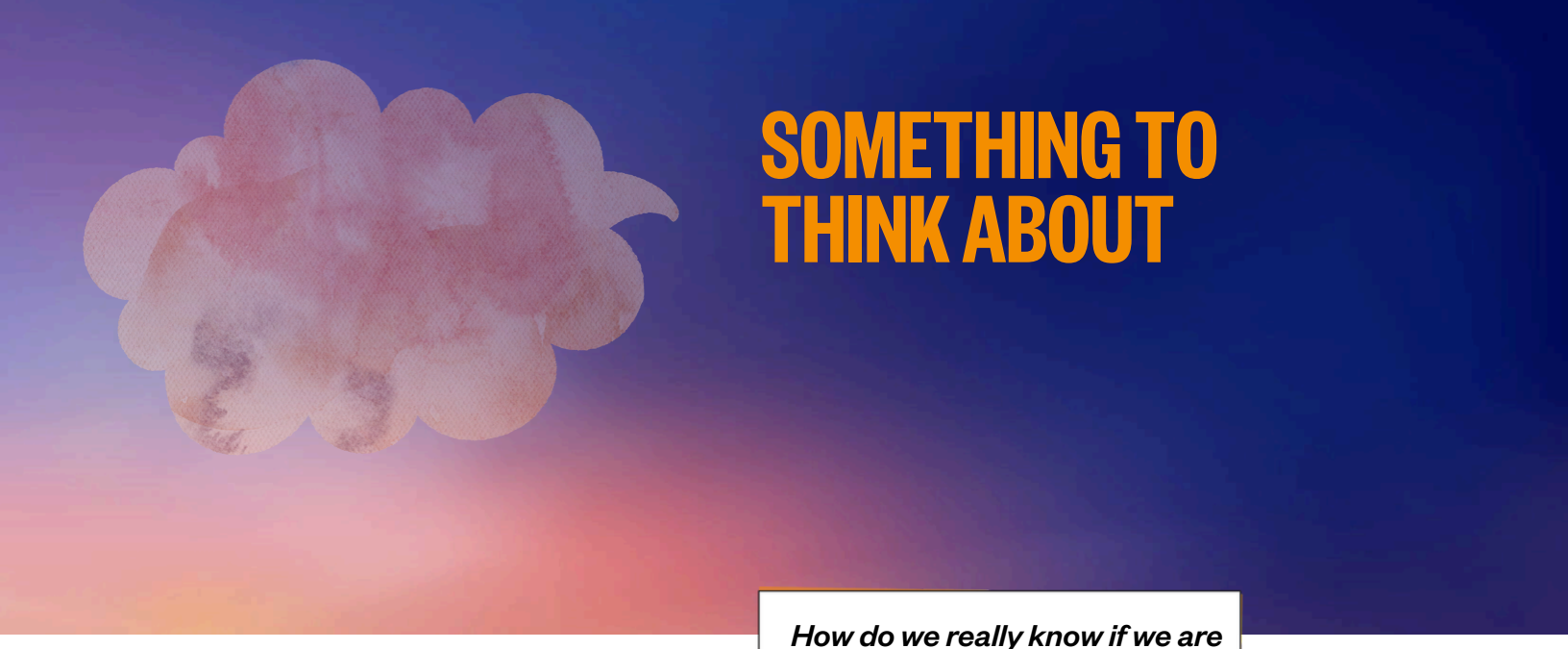
3. Judaism believes that people only achieve greatness through their choices. Even if one is born into greatness or has greatness thrust upon them, they only have greatness in potential, what they choose to do with the greatness is actually the real greatness.

4. The Torah explicitly shares the importance of making the right choices. Check out this verse: "I have placed before you life and death, blessing and curse; choose life!" (Deut. 30:20)

5. Here is a basic question: Do we need to be told by the Almighty to choose blessing and life? Isn't that obvious?

6. Here's the simple answer. Life and death, good and evil are not always black and white. Life presents many counterfeit pleasures that are at best escapes for real living. Good and evil are not always glaringly apparent. The mandate is to figure out what life truly is and what is genuinely good.

7. The last 10+ months have given us a front row seat in this struggle, as so many have confused good and evil and chosen the counterfeit good, embraced those that embrace death and neglected those that choose life and truth.



SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

How do we really know if we are choosing life and goodness?

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Here are a few practical tools to empower us to be more choice conscious and to assist us in ultimately making the right choices.

1. Take time to consider your goals and values (FYI, Olami Mentorship has a fantastic session on this topic that you can access here)
2. Sit down with a paper and pen and analyze your situation using pros and cons.
3. Sensitize yourself as to the meta-moment in which you are making a decision. Often we choose without even realizing that we are choosing.
4. Take time to review your recent decisions.
5. Try to take into account the long-term ramifications of your current choice.
6. Take time to decide and choose. Often deferring a decision impacts a different outcome.
7. Find a friend or mentor to objectively analyze your predicament and provide genuine insight.

CHOICE WAS SO IMPORTANT TO BEN

As you take this week to upgrade your life by focusing on actively making decisions, please **use this QR code or this link to send a message to Ben's family.**

It will mean the world to them!

JOIN US NOW

OLAMI.ORG/LEGACIES

The Michael and Andrea Leven Family Foundation Legacies Initiative

OLAMI MENTORSHIP