

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

“Tiku vachodesh shofar, bakeseh l'yom chageinu” — “Sound the shofar at the new moon, at the full moon for our feast day” (Psalm 81:4, the verse traditionally linked to the sounding of the shofar that has carried through Elul each morning this week, building toward the Days of Awe.)

- Another week of Elul, another stack of good news to get through — this time led by a genuine medical first that's been making headlines well beyond Israel.
- At Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem, neurosurgeon Prof. Yigal Shoshan and his team have pulled off a world first in the treatment of glioblastoma, the most aggressive form of brain cancer. Using Alpha DaRT, an Israeli-developed therapy that places tiny radioactive sources directly inside a tumour rather than aiming radiation at it from outside, the team treated a patient's recurrent tumour by implanting sources through two separate trajectories at once — a technique never before used on this disease anywhere in the world. It follows Hadassah's milestone in June, when it became the first site outside the United States to treat a glioblastoma patient with Alpha DaRT at all. The treatment remains experimental and part of an early clinical trial, but doctors hope the twin-path approach will let them cover more of a tumour without sacrificing the precision that keeps healthy brain tissue safe.
- Over at Ichilov, hospital researchers have found a way to cut back on blood testing without cutting corners. Looking at nearly 7,500 evaluations for a clotting-related antibody, where close to 90% of tests ultimately come back negative anyway, a team led by Dr Bentzi Katz built an AI model that uses two routine coagulation results to flag, early on, which samples are vanishingly unlikely to need the full seven-test battery. Published in Nature's Digital Medicine journal, the approach could mean fewer needles, shorter waits for results and freed-up lab time, if it holds up elsewhere.
- Tourism kept climbing too: 109,000 visitors entered the country in July, according to Israel's Tourism Ministry, a 28% jump over the same month last year and the latest sign that the travel warnings which kept so many visitors away are gradually lifting. Just over half a million tourists have now entered Israel since the start of the year.
- There was good news from the exit column as well. Munich Re, the German reinsurance giant, agreed to buy Israeli-founded cyber insurtech At-Bay for \$575 million, folding the company's cyber insurance and risk-monitoring platform into its specialty insurance arm. At-Bay was founded in 2016 by Rotem Iram and three co-founders and still keeps an R&D team in Israel; Iram said joining Munich Re would help the company reach the many small businesses that remain badly under-insured against cyberattacks.
- And Ramat Gan has turned up a find of its own: a 1,300-year-old commercial and industrial complex, uncovered by the Israel Antiquities Authority in, of all places, a stadium car park. Ahead of a new bus terminal, archaeologists found neatly laid-out streets, what look like shops and warehouses, pottery kilns and a haul of coins, oil lamps and tools — evidence of a planned town centre built by engineers under early Islamic rule, humming with activity for roughly 150 years before it was abandoned. It's a reminder that this small stretch of coastline has had a lot of neighbours over the centuries, and most of them left something behind.
- And in a quieter, more solemn kind of good news: after 44 years, Israel brought home the remains of Sgt. First Class Yehuda Katz, the last soldier still missing from the 1982 Battle of Sultan Yacoub. Located in a joint Mossad and Military Intelligence operation and laid to rest on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives on Friday, Katz's return closes the final open case from one of the most difficult battles in Israel's history — a reminder, as the IDF's chief of staff put it, that the promise to leave no one behind outlasts even four decades.
- Between a hospital breakthrough, an AI shortcut that could spare people needless bloodwork, and a 1,300-year-old shopping street turning up under a parking lot, it's been a week for finding the useful and the unexpected in equal measure.



In Loving Memory

GN Israel is proudly brought to you by Joe, Barry and Adi Cohen, in loving memory of Mark Cohen z"l, who founded this newsletter and ran it until 2011.

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