

A Fruitful New Year



The Liska Rebbe, Rav Tzvi Hersh Friedlander, pictured giving fruit to his son, HaRav Sholem Chaim Friedlander, on Tu B'Shevat.

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What Is To Be Accomplished

“At the outset, the initiative was designed to bring world Jewry to Israel and bring Israel to world Jewry,” a document distributed by the Jewish Agency explained in an internal document.

In part, this effort looks like a way of strengthening Israel’s position by building support among a Diaspora Jewry whose younger generation is not as committed to the defense of Israel as its progenitors.

and that the Diaspora Affairs ministry “will have a major role in being the implementation arm of the government.” JAFI will also serve to help represent Diaspora communities to the government.

“Within a month, we will have an implementation structure, including what kind of deal or entity will actually be managing the initiative,” Alan Hoffman, the director general of JAFI, told me over a week ago.

Dvir Kahana, the director general of the Diaspora Affairs ministry, told the *Jerusalem Post* that recommendations

“At the outset, the initiative was designed to bring world Jewry to Israel and bring Israel to world Jewry.”

However, it is also true—as pundits are always fond of reminding us—that programs that bring people to Israel have a remarkable effect in minimizing exogamy among their participants.

During a series of exclusive interviews with some of the major players in the initiative, I was able to tease out a timeline for what is to come. Issues of content and governance (how this will be run on the Israeli side) are still being negotiated.

However, it is known that Yael Weiss Gadish, a JAFI official, has been chosen as the initiative’s senior professional,

regarding content and programs should be ready by the end of next month and a budget framework may be brought to the government for deliberation within months.

The target demographic for the programs is young Jews 12–35 years old, which, as several participants pointed out, was underrepresented at the November meeting and in subsequent follow-up meetings. However, despite many misgivings on the part of critics, if Israel can pull this off it will be major. It’s a “really significant paradigm shift,” one Federation executive told me. ♣



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