



March 2024



American-Jewish Parents and October 7 Aftermath

Initial Analysis of American-Jewish parents' attitudes towards a consideration of ANU's educational efforts and outreach

Koret Center for Jewish Civilization
Talia Gorodess

Background and Introduction

ANU is the largest museum of the Jewish people, and an Israeli institution which aspires to foster a sense of belonging to the Jewish people. As such, ANU senior management wishes to understand in a systematic manner the reactions, attitudes and potential patterns of behavior among American Jewry post October 7th events. The purpose of this exploration is to ultimately derive insights regarding ANU's educational activities and outreach efforts, as well as permanent and temporary Museum exhibitions and attempts at creating meaningful Jewish dialogue.

Parents of today's college students who went to college in the 90s are astounded at the amount of antisemitism that their children are facing. Pro-Palestine protesters have ripped down posters of hostages, have denied the atrocities, and have staged violent protests outside of Sloan Kettering Hospital in New York.

As a museum with an education department that serves Jewish students and teachers from all over the world, but primarily from the United States we, along with all people active in the sphere of Jewish education, have been following the events and thinking about how to mitigate or at least arm our program participants with skills and tools to face new and unforeseen threats. As a major Jewish museum specializing in creating experiences of belonging, we believe that this is precisely the antidote to the fear and isolation that many North Americans are feeling.

By now, it is clear that the war between Israel and Hamas has impacted American-Jewish life, and will likely continue to do so. We therefore took upon ourselves the task of creating a better understanding of shifting attitudes and patterns of behavior among one of its key constituencies, American-Jewry. We believe this understanding may not only serve the needs of ANU, but may be beneficial to any Jewish professional, lay leader or community member in the U.S. and to any Israeli concerned about the survival and prosperity of the Jewish people.

In this context, we interpret the events of October 7th and their ongoing implications in Israel and around the world as a global Jewish event, and not merely as a domestic Israeli one.¹ For the time being, ANU chose to focus on American Jewry, but may expand this research effort to additional Jewish communities in the future.

¹ Jewish women experience a 'double' trauma, as they suffer from two (or more) vulnerabilities: an ethnic one and a gender-based one. See: Amalia Rosenblum, "[It's dangerous to be Jewish, it's dangerous to be a woman](#)", Haaretz, 11/19/2023 (Hebrew).

ANU's Unique Perspective

Approximately a dozen surveys and/or reports have been published since October 7th by Israel and American Jewish think tanks, universities, and other community, education, or advocacy organizations. Despite their contribution, which will be subsequently discussed, they also fail to address directly a key population: American-Jewish parents. **There is currently no single study solely dedicated to study American-Jewish parents**, despite their influence on child education, identity, and choices. With surging levels of anti-semitism and strong anti-Israel sentiments post October 7th, many American-Jews experience safety concerns and rising anxiety levels. Initial research indicates that parents seem to experience higher levels of panic and anxiety compared to other groups - a universal parent trait that is heightened during times of war and uncertainty.² The purpose of this report is to focus on what can already be deduced about American-Jewish parent changing attitudes and behaviors in the aftermath of October 7th, with the following hypothesis: **Considering present trends among Jewish parents in the U.S., our assumption is that more parents and/or grandparents may be willing to invest time and resources in the Jewish education of their children at home**, thereby possibly establishing family-based Jewish learning in numbers unfamiliar in recent history.

Methodology

This report draws from a combination of quantitative and qualitative sources. This report does not aim to offer a scientific claim about American-Jewish parents, but rather serve as a point of reference for ANU's strategic decisions about organizational priorities, resource allocation, outreach outlets, potential partners and so on - as well as serve relevant professional circles in the Jewish world.

Qualitative sources used in this report include interviews with thought leaders and practitioners in the field, as well as articles, lectures, speeches, podcasts, scholarly articles and/or journals published in the wake of October 7th and its aftermath.

Quantitative sources used include the following elements:

- All main surveys and reports published between October 7th, 2023 and March 7th, 2024.³ In addition, this report relies on prior surveys on American Jews, published between 2020-2023. The

² Stearns, Peter N. *Anxious parents: A history of modern childrearing in America*. NYU Press, 2004; Nelson, Margaret K. *Parenting out of control: Anxious parents in uncertain times*. NYU Press, 2010; Nelson, S. Katherine, Kostadin Kushlev, and Sonja Lyubomirsky. "The pains and pleasures of parenting: When, why, and how is parenthood associated with more or less well-being?." *Psychological bulletin* 140, no. 3 (2014): 846.

³ Surveys published *after* October 7th, 2023 include: The Jewish People Policy Institute and World Zionist Organization, *Attitudes of U.S. Jews In The Third Week of Iron Swords*, October 2023; Jewish Federations of North America and Beneson Strategy Group, *2023 Israel Hamas War Sentiment Survey*, November 2023; Hillel International and ADL, *Campus AntiSemitism: A Study of Campus Climate Before and After the Hamas Terrorist Attacks*, November 2023; Brandeis University, *Shadows of War: Hotspots of Campus Anti Semitism On US College Campuses*, 12/14/2023; Prizmah Center for Jewish Day Schools, *Enrollment Trend Report: The Impact of the Israel-Hamas War on Jewish Day Schools in North America*, 12/21/2023; WZO, Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and JAFI, *The State of Antisemitism in the World - A Summary of the First Three Weeks of the Swords of Iron War*, November 7th, 2023;

AJC, *The State of Antisemitism in America 2023*, February 13th, 2023; MoreInCommon, *Changing Attitudes on AntiSemitism in America Before and After 10/7*, December 2023;

JPPI, *The Voice of the People Index*, February 2024 (Hebrew).

Surveys published prior to October 7th include: Pew Research Center, *Jewish Americans in 2020*, 2020; Jewish Electorate Institute, *July 2021 National Survey of Jewish Voters*, 2021; American Jewish Committee, *Survey on*

surveys have the potential to portray a multitude of perspectives, as they were conducted by a combination of American, Jewish-American, and Israeli institutions.⁴ In many cases, the main topics of consideration were similar, even if the wording of the questions, sample sizes and/or definitions of age groups naturally differ.

- Digital tools for the purpose of identifying changes in traffic, e-commerce, keyword searches, and language and concepts. Tools used include GoogleTrends, GoogleAnalytics, and Thematic Analysis A deeper analysis will benefit from services provided by companies like [SimilarWeb](#), [SEOptimizer](#), or [JungleScout](#), which allow for a deeper examination of website sub-pages, categories, and specific product searches, sales and trends;
- Informal data gathered from summer camps, trip providers, schools and/or congregations.

The Existential Challenge of American-Jewish Parents

External trends, like the upcoming U.S. presidential elections (November 5th, 2024), rising levels of anti-semitism across the board, alongside the reign of identity politics, Woke culture are exacerbated by an often superficial, binary discourse which all too easily results in cancel culture and boycotts of various kinds⁵ – all work against the well-being of the American-Jewish community, who has grown accustomed to decades of unprecedented security and prosperity as an ethnic minority in the U.S..

While for many Israelis October 7th was an existential wake-up call, placing new question marks on the very promise of the “Never Again” promise the nation-state of the Jewish people was meant to provide, many American-Jews similarly face new questions about belonging, at-homeness, and the possibility of successful integration into a non-Jewish society in the long-run.⁶ Trapped between the need for greater connection, community, and Jewish pride and solidarity - and real concerns for their children’s physical and emotional safety, many Jewish parents struggle to maintain the hyphenated identity that served them successfully for years. A Jewish mother from San-Diego, California, quoted in an informal, small-scale survey of 85 parents conducted by Kveller, described it as a “constant struggle on wanting to be more outwardly proud but also being aware of where we are.”⁷

At this point in time, it is virtually impossible to predict where the tide will go. Will rising levels of fear and panic result in self-segregation and perhaps even willingness to change patterns of behavior when it comes to cultural, religious, linguistic and/or culinary habits in the household? Or will it result in a greater number of individuals who choose to opt-out, simply because being Jewish today is too complicated, demanding, dangerous and isolating? Initial evidence suggests that more Jews seek connection and opportunities to belong, despite the self-reported levels of fear and concern. The section below will present existing evidence highlighting some of changes experienced by many American-Jewish parents,

American and Israeli Jewish Millennials, 2022; American Jewish Committee, *The State of Anti-Semitism in America 2022: Survey of American Jews*, 2022.

⁴Unless stated otherwise, all numbers referred to in this report rely on the above surveys.

⁵ Bari Weiss, “We Got Here Because of Cowardice. We Get Out With Courage”, *Commentary Magazine*, November 2021; Sobande, F., Kanai, A., & Zeng, N. (2022). The hypervisibility and discourses of ‘wokeness’ in digital culture. *Media, Culture & Society*, 44(8), 1576-1587; Yascha Mounk, “Where the New Identity Politics Went Wrong”, *The Atlantic*, Sep 26th, 2023.

⁶ Ofer Shiff, “The Integrative Function of Early American Zionism” (Heb.), *The Journal of Israeli History*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1994), pp. 1-16; Ofer Shiff, *Assimilation in Pride, Anti-Semitism, Holocaust and Zionism as Challenges to Universalistic American Jewish Reform Ideology*, Tel Aviv: Am Oved (2001) [Heb]; Franklin Foer, “The Golden Age of American Jews is Ending”, *The Atlantic*, March 4th, 2024.

⁷ Lior Zaltzman, “How Parents Are Handling Jewish Fear and Pride”, *Kveller*, November 2nd, 2023.

establishing them as an important group to consider. The following section will present initial evidence suggesting that American-Jewish parents may not only stay in the panic zone, but may also be willing to invest time and resources in the Jewish identity of their children or grandchildren.

Focus on American-Jewish Parents: Emerging Trends

“Tense, Uncomfortable and Scary”: How Antisemitism is Affecting Parents

By now, rising levels of various forms of antisemitism are well-documented. Anti-Semitic incidents, speech and presence in the public sphere have not only risen manifold since October 7th 2023, but have also diversified in terms of type and distribution.⁸ Additionally, another documented change is the perception of the threat by many American-Jews, many of whom are parents to school-aged or college-aged children.⁹

Hillel-ADL survey found that nearly three-quarters of Jewish students experienced or witnessed Antisemitism on campus. Since October 7, the percentage of Jewish students who said they feel comfortable with others on campus knowing they are Jewish dropped by nearly half.¹⁰ A Brandeis-Birthright Israel survey of undergraduate Jewish students from 51 colleges and universities across the United States found that at all schools, more students were concerned about antisemitism related to criticism of Israel than they were about antisemitism related to traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes, with Jewish students are most likely to encounter anti-Israel hostility from other students on campus, as opposed to faculty or administrators. At the most hostile schools, about 80% of Jewish students reported encountering hostility toward Israel from other students “sometimes” or “often.”¹¹ A safe assumption is that these sentiments are often conveyed to the students’ parents, who in turn – are forced to rethink their children’s school choice, in a conversation that travels well beyond any individual household and may influence future college and university choices of Jewish parents.

FBI data reveals that antisemitism is not only rising, but also seems to be hitting closer to home – another obvious reason for elevated panic level among Jewish parents.

An FBI report from 2021 states that Jews remain the single most targeted religious minority in America,¹² with data comparison between the years 2014 and 2022 showing that in 2014, there were 44 School / college incidents; In 2022, there were 109 school elementary/secondary incidents; In 2014, there were 172 residence home incidents, compared with 208 in 2022. This steady increase comes at a time when the

⁸ 70% of American-Jews feel less safe during the war, with a similar number (72%) who felt it was rising in their community. JFNA, *Israel-Hamas War Sentiment Survey*, October 29th-November 1st 2023.

⁹ The percentage of Americans who see antisemitism as a problem in the US increased by 16%. *MoreInCommon*, 2023.

¹⁰ Hillel-ADL, *Campus Antisemitism*, November 2023.

¹¹ Brandeis-Birthright, *Shadows of War*, December 2023.

¹² Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime Data Explorer, 2022. In 2022, at least 11,634 hate crime incidents reported to the FBI by law enforcement agencies. Anti-Jewish incidents were the most common religion-related hate crime, totalling 1,124 incidents. In comparison, Arabs, Muslims and Sikhs in the US, who faced a wave of post-9/11 discrimination and hate violence, experienced 431 hate crimes in 2022. These are absolute numbers. While Jews are estimated at about 2.4% of the U.S. population (Pew, 2021), Muslim are estimated to be 1.1% of the U.S. population (Pew, 2017), expected to become the second largest religious group in the U.S. after Christians by 2040.

total size of the U.S. Jewish population remained stable.¹³ Notice especially the sharp increase in school incidents, which has been receiving special focus by recent surveys mentioned above. An especially troubling data point is that during 2022, 90 anti-Semitic incidents recorded by the FBI took place in playgrounds or parks, a category which either did not exist prior to 2022 or did not make it to the top five locations surveyed in the report.

Impact on Parents' Education Choices

University and College Campuses - For better and for worse, Jewish ethnic origin is seen as intimately linked to having an affinity with the State of Israel and its actions, regardless of any student's particular political viewpoints. 98% of American Jews heard about Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, and 78% of feel less as a Jewish people in the U.S. as a result.¹⁴ Parents have responded to these trends in various ways, for example:

- More than a dozen families told CNN their priorities “have shifted since October 7” as they apply to colleges, given the ongoing tension on campuses.
- The popularity of Hillel's 2nd virtual college prep session, titled “Careful Considerations: Antisemitism on Campus”, which directly referred to the impact of Hamas' attack on Israel. The session aimed to help families prepare for college amid “the changing campus environment.”¹⁵ Similarly, in an unusual choice, “No Silly Questions”, an education podcast for parents designed for general audiences, hosted a special episode titled “What is Happening with antisemitism on college campuses?”. The hosts revealed their conflicting emotions - from Jewish pride to safety concerns.¹⁶
- A consultancy firm that helps students apply to top-tier colleges reports that many Jewish clients are removing specific schools from their list, such as Cornell and Columbia, adding that students' families are also steering away from UPenn, Harvard, and MIT – following the notorious congressional testimony on Capitol Hill from their respective Presidents, in what became a staple of moral collapse and intellectual bankruptcy, according to many observers.¹⁷ At the same time, however, merely three months following the presidents' hearing and subsequent turmoil, The Princeton Review's 2024 College Hopes and Worries Survey found that Harvard University is back on top as college applicants' “dream school”.¹⁸ To date, the immediate impact on Harvard seems to have been on the early application phase, which dropped an unprecedented 17%.¹⁹ It is too early to gauge the impact of the hearing and campus antisemitic atmosphere generally on the choices of Jewish parents and their children.

¹³ Pew Research Center, *Jewish Americans in 2020*, May 11th 2021.

¹⁴ AJC, *The State of Antisemitism in America 2023*.

¹⁵ See: Hillel's virtual College Prep Series, which includes three sessions. According to Hillel

¹⁶ Danielle Freilich and Jordana Fruchter, “NSQ Special: What is happening with antisemitism on college campuses? With Rabbi David Wolpe”, *No Silly Questions – An Education Podcast for Parents*, S3 EP13, 01/28/2024.

¹⁷ Christopher Rim, “As the Ivy League Faces Backlash For Its Response to Antisemitism, DeSantis Steps Up”, *Forbes*, 01/10/2024; Bianca Quilatan, “Cornell and Columbia among 7 schools under scrutiny for antisemitism, Islamophobia”, *Politico*, 11/17/2023,

¹⁸ Jessica Dickler, “Harvard is back on top as college hopefuls' ultimate ‘dream’ school”, *CNBC*, March 5th, 2024

¹⁹ Michelle N. Amponsah and Emma H. Haidar, “Harvard Accepts 8.74% of Early Applicants to Class of 2028 in First Admissions Cycle After SCOTUS Ruling”, *The Harvard Crimson*, December 14th, 2023.

Schools – In the U.S., a relatively small minority of Jewish children attend Jewish Day School. An Avi-Chai Foundation survey from 2018-2019 found that in the 2018-2019 school year, a total of 292,172 students were enrolled in Jewish elementary and secondary school in the U.S., a 14.% increase in the five-year period since the most recent census in 2013-2014, and a 58.5% increase since 1998, with the largest enrollment groups being Yeshiva and Chassidic institutions.²⁰ Still, less than 10% of American-Jewish children attend a Day School. The pre-Covid years (2016-2020) brought about a dramatic decline in Hebrew School (supplementary) enrollment, with many new “learning pods” springing – that would later become a pandemic fad.²¹ Day School enrollment, on the other hand, rose steadily – even during the pandemic years.

- In the aftermath of October 7, numerous public schools became a challenge for many Jewish parents. Consider the following examples: In New York City, Jewish leaders, teachers and parents demanded that the schools do more to address what they see as antisemitism, staging a rally on the steps of the city’s education department. In Montgomery County, Md., a petition supporting the investigation of teachers for sharing pro-Palestinian and messages garnered 3,500 signatures. In California, at least 30 Jewish families have requested transfer out of the Oakland Unified School District because of issues related to the Israel-Gaza war.²²
- Some of these seemingly isolated stories that made the news translated into actual changes in behavior. Post October 7, initial evidence suggests that the Parents are willing to invest more resources in formal Jewish education. The findings below are taken from the recent Prizmah survey of Jewish school enrollment trends in the U.S. after October 7:²³
 - 42 schools reported receiving 146 inquiries and a total of 24 public school transfer students already enrolled in 13 schools.
 - Top reasons schools reported that public school transfer families provided for transferring were: “wanting their child(ren) to be in a Jewish environment (73%); “Fear of antisemitism in school or community” (68%); and last – “Response from their current school around the war in Israel” (32%).
 - 20% of schools (22 schools) reported receiving inquiries and or enrollment from independent school students interested in transferring midyear.
 - Top reasons schools reported that independent school transfer families provided for transferring: “Wanting their child(ren) to be in a Jewish environment” (80%); “Response from their current school around the war in Israel” (50%); and last – “Fear of antisemitism in school or community” (40%).

More Jews Seeking Community and Belonging

While research shows a consistent decline in congregation affiliation²⁴, a finding that remains staggeringly high is Jewish friendships and social circles. According a JFNA survey from late October

²⁰ Mordechai Besser, *A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States 2018-2019*, , Avi-Chai Foundation, Elul 5780-August 2020.

²¹ Asaf Elia-Shalev/JTA, “US Hebrew school enrollment down by nearly half since 2006 – report”, *The Jerusalem Post*, 04/20/2023.

²² Laura Meckler, “Some Jewish Parents Angry and Fearful When Teachers Back Palestinians”, *The Washington Post*, 02/04/2024.

²³ Prizmah Center for Jewish Day Schools, *Enrollment Trend Report*, 12/21/2023.

²⁴ Pew, *Portrait of Jewish Americans*, 2020.

2023, 79% of Jews report that some, most, or all their friends are Jewish. The survey did not ask directly about community event attendance, but reports by community and congregation leaders is piling up, pointing in one direction: More Jews are seeking community – a trend true to all ages and denominations. In the absence of raw data on this topic, consider the following testimonies:

- Yehuda Kurtzer of the Hartman Institute writes: “Now I see signs of reengagement, reflected in higher turnout at synagogue, Hillel and Chabad events, and expressed on social media as a response to a sense of alienation from a gentile world that does not take Jewish pain and trauma seriously. This is happening at all ages.”²⁵
- Accordingly, the term “Hillel House” saw a spike of +130% since Oct 7, with notable peaks on Oct 7, another on November 26th 2023 (likely related to Chanukkah), and an additional peak during February 2024. The search term “JCC” saw a +350% spike in Google searches in the past five months – **suggesting a greater interest in opportunities to belong both on campus and in the community.**



- Rabbi Angela Buchdal reports that Free Synagogue, the largest of the Manhattan congregations, is “full-house” every Shabbat evening, and virtually every family programming fully booked, with Israel related programs enjoying three times the attendance. Phrases like “I wanna be with other Jews” or “I wanna do shabbat with my Jewish friends” are commonly heard.²⁶
- According to a Chabad poll, demand for services across the U.S. is significantly higher, with 93.4% of respondents say that they are witnessing a stronger feeling of “connection to the Jewish people or desire to connect to other Jews” among community members.²⁷
- **This suggests that not only do “Jews hang out with Jews”, which we knew from previous surveys, they may also be willing to engage with Jewish content while spending time together.**

Religious practice and spiritual connection

- **Rising popularity of Tefillin and Talmud study?** - Within a week of the attack, more than \$400,000 have been raised in the U.S. not in order to aid Israel, but to purchase tefilin for

²⁵ Yehuda Kurtzer, “How Oct 7 is reshaping the Zionist – and anti-Zionist – left in the US”, *The Forward*, 11/30/2023.

²⁶ Interview with Rabbi Angela Buchdal, 02/23/2024.

²⁷ Moshe New, “Amid War, Terror and Antisemitism, Survey Reports Spiritual Awakening of American Jewry”, *Chabad*, 11/08/2023.

American-Jews, in an online campaign which seems to have answered demand and also create it. Receivers of the tefilin committed to wearing them daily.²⁸



The graph above represents the rising popularity of Talmud searches on Google in the U.S.. Unlike other search terms, “Talmud” seems to spark interest consistently, in a trend that should be further examined. For example – do Jews seek out Talmud study inside or outside of the home? Are parents interested in introducing it to the household?

- **Calls for lighting Shabbat candles seem to have gained momentum** – from public calls made by Denis Bar-Aharon, CEO of Make a Wish Foundation in Israel or South African Chief Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein of the Shabbat Project, have been gaining ground immediately following the attack.²⁹ Chabad Rabbis report that more people are lighting Shabbat candles, purchasing and donning tefillin, some for the first time; saying the Shema prayer daily, backing challah, wearing Jewish jewelry publicly and attending synagogue more regularly.³⁰
- **Despite fears, Greater pride** – many websites and shops report a surge in sales of all things Jewish – from traditional Jewish jewelry of Maden David and Chai necklaces, to properly religious items like Shabbat candle holders, mezuzah, tehillim (psalms) book, or a tefilin set – as well as what can be titled “Israeli war merchandize” in the form of gold and silver “Bring Them Home” tag necklace, buttons or flags.³¹ A sub-trend is more people purchasing books about self-development and spirituality, or make an effort to purchase something that was crafted in Israel. In this context, perhaps the term “Judaica” is misleading, failing to convey the full complexity and richness of this trend – which encompasses not only traditional items like Mezuzah or a Menorah but also includes properly religious items, such as Tefilin and a Siddur, as well as Israeli “Bring Them Home” tags. This Israel-triggered sense of Jewish peoplehood reflects current sentiment more accurately than the traditional “Judaica” category.

Focus on American-Jewish Parents: Nascent Family Trends

An important caveat regarding this section has to do with the fact that there is currently no data on Jewish parents’ attitudes and behaviors post October 7 as they relate to household practices, preferences, and lifestyle.

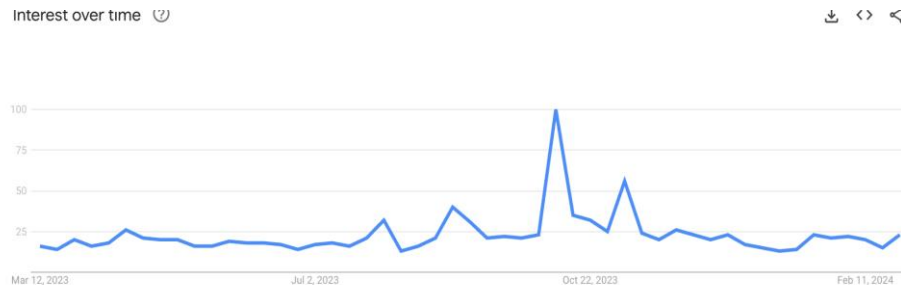
²⁸ Fraigie Levy Holt, “More than 1,400 Men to Wear Free Tefillin in Memory of Those Murdered in Israel”, *Chabad.org News*, 10/18/2023.

²⁹ Zvika Klein, “Jews Unite Worldwide, light Shabbat, memorial candles for Slain Israelis”, *The Jerusalem Post*, 10/13/2023.

³⁰ New, “Spiritual Awakening of American Jewry”, *Chabad*, 11/08/2023.

³¹ Tori Bergel, Judaica sales surge as community members seek ‘a little Jewish joy’ during a difficult time”, *Jewish Insider*, 12/14/2023.

- **Continued interest in Jewish education** – the Prizmah survey mentioned in the previous section showed an increase in enrollment inquiries, including (even) mid-year transfers to Jewish schools. It is difficult to predict how it will affect actual enrollments for September 2024, but GoogleTrends shows a clear spike post October 7, alongside a modest, yet steady rise in Jewish day schools in the U.S., which seems to continue five months into the war:



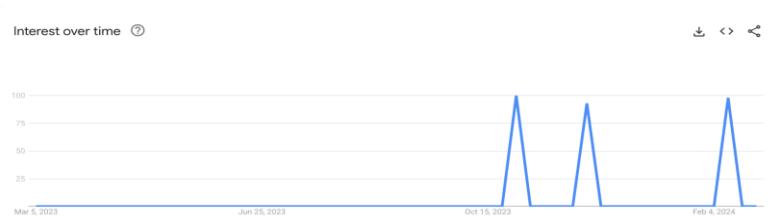
- **Doubling of non-Jewish spouses who wish to convert** – one would assume that during times of wars and pogroms, being Jewish would not be an immediate choice – but instead of witnessing a silent ‘opting-out’ of the Jewish people, unofficial reports reveal that in big, liberal congregations in New York City, demand for conversions is soaring – with hundreds of new converts in Central Synagogue alone. Rabbis throughout the city report being overwhelmed by this unusual demand, and predict thousands of new converts altogether. This number will not change the Jewish landscape, but are meaningful in terms of gauging the existential turmoil many households are experiencing at the moment. Since converting is more taking than wearing a Magan David necklace, for example, this micro-trend begs questions about new demand for Jewish content in the household. What does it mean when one of the parents suddenly finds it important to officially join the Jewish people? What may be the implications of this primal need to connect and belong to the Jewish people, share common destiny and purpose? A recent convert writes:
 - I am a progressive lawyer and social worker and had never distrusted social justice peers until post 10/7. I see so much hate. I married a Jewish man, the love of my life, 30 years ago. We raised our children Jewishly and they attended Hebrew school. I did not convert because I was continuously told my children would be recognized as Jewish. In mid October I enrolled in conversion classes. Just for me, to learn and know and continue Jewish civilization. My whole world is like living in the upside down. And all I can think about is becoming Jewish and supporting Israel. I may never be Jewish enough in some eyes, but I don’t care. It’s in my bones.”³²
- **As the cost of Jewish education remains high, parents seek out more accessible ways to connect their children to their Jewish identity.**

Online Content - An analysis of two leading Jewish content Youtube channels for children, Shaboom and Shalom Sesamee, shows both enjoyed a significant rise in **new subscribers**. Shaboom, “a channel for families raising Jewish kids”, enjoyed a 28.57% increase in new user subscriptions between 2023-2024, and ShalomSesamee, “a cross-platform media initiative

³² Kristin, “It’s been 3 months since October 7th. How is life pre and post Oct 7th different for you?”, comment on *AJewishResistance* IG page 01/07/2024.

developed to introduce American children to Jewish culture, Hebrew language and the diversity of Israel”, enjoyed a more modest yet meaningful increase of 14.29% in new user subscriptions. These sites offer general Jewish content, focused on culture and holidays, Hebrew, and Israel. In contrast, the religious AlephBeta Youtube channel, offering “videos that make Torah come to life”, registered in fact a drop of 10% in new subscribers between 2023-2024 – suggesting a greater demand for cultural Jewish content for children.³³

Jewish Children’s Books – GoogleTrends in the U.S. shows the familiar spike in searches related to Jewish children’s books immediately following October 7, another peak prior to Channukah, and yet another, less obvious peak in February.



Interestingly, the corresponding Amazon category boasts an atypical title: [Under the Rockets' Glow](#): Shira's Journey to Courage, is ranked #4 in the Amazon best-selling books in the Children’s Judaism Books category. In 'Under The Rockets' Glow: Tales of Resilience and Hope,' a young girl named Shira learns about her Jewish heritage through her father's inspiring stories, finding courage amidst a night of rocket fire. This book draws from Jewish history, taking the long view – from Abraham to modern-day Israel, emphasizing the importance of finding hope in the face of fear.

- **Continued interest in preparing Jewish food** – based on search terms related to various ways of backing Challah, as well as the newfound popularity of the book *I Could Nosh: Classic Jew-ish Recipes Revamped for Every Day*, which started on October 7 and continued since, there is growing willingness of Jews to alter their behavior in the household, and engage in activities (baking, preparing for Shabbat) in higher rates.

At this point, it can be said that several indicators point in the direction of Jewish parents’ greater willingness to take more responsibility over their children’s Jewish education. The emphasis seems to be cultural, historical, family and/or Israel-related, and not religious in the Halachic sense of the word. Further study is needed to confirm these observations. See Appendix I for a list of questions targeting Jewish parents Anu wishes to explore.

Conclusion

The backdrop to this report is a series of ruptures in Jewish life whose effects are only just beginning to be felt, focusing on the experience of American-Jewish parents. As we have seen from newly found changes in culinary, community, education, and even conversion patterns – there is room to assume that

³³ Complete numbers and analysis is with *Anu's* research department.

Jewish-Parents have the potential to emerge as key constituency, with its ability to not only influence short-term product demand but longer-term feelings of multi-generational attachment and belonging to the Jewish people.

Yehuda Kurtzer, president of the Shalom Hartman Institute, wrote that for some liberal Jews, a re-engagement with their Jewish selves may reflect “a real existential transformation away from those exact liberal values and commitments they held dear for a long time. It is something of a replay of the prior generation’s anti-Communist turn in the 1960s and 1970s, a journey inward from the universal to the particular.”³⁴ At the same time, however, there seems to be an opposing trend – from individualism, loneliness and isolation, especially following the pandemic years, towards connection, community, and people. Mijal Bitton writes: “What has transpired since October 7, in response to events both in Israel and America, should serve as a wake-up call to the organized Jewish community. The muscle of Jewish peoplehood still works. It is incumbent upon us to recognize the young inhabitants of this new Jewish middle ground and help them prepare for the future.”³⁵ It is for Jewish educators and professionals to continue exploring these opportunities, and perhaps even their duty to think about ways to turn the existential crisis of October 7 into one of the biggest opportunities the Jewish world has known in recent history – a chance to establish family-based Jewish learning at this time in liberal households in America.

More to Explore

Some of the questions that need to be addressed include:

1. Holocaust education remains a basic feature of American-Jewish life - with 91% of American-Jews reporting they have either “visited a museum about the holocaust” or “taken part in other ways” about learning about the holocaust.³⁶ Will this number influence or can somehow be tied to what is commonly referred to as “the most lethal attack on Jews since the holocaust” and a generally “Jewish event”?
2. Summer camps in 2024 are materializing as a potential battle ground around Israel and its place in Jewish identity. Are we likely to see rising enrollment, or vice versa? Will parents show greater willingness to be involved in summer camps programming and curriculum, as they have been in elementary public school or campus choices? If so, should ANU invest in new products for summer camps, and/or alter existing products? (e.g., Hope Kit for children).
3. Assuming greater willingness to invest more time and develop Jewish literacy in the household, what are some of the areas that are of most interest to parents, and is it sizable enough to justify changing some of ANU’s marketing channels?
4. The full list of questions can be found in a separate document, attached to this report.

³⁴ Yehuda Kurtzer, “How Oct 7 is reshaping the Zionist – and anti-Zionist – left in the US”, *The Forward*, 11/30/2023.

³⁵ Mijal Bitton, “Before & After October 7: A Symposium, *The Jewish Review of Books*, Winter 2024.

³⁶ JFNA, *American-Jewish Attitudes*, 2023.