

# Knesset Member Danny Dannon's Address to the Sephardic Community

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**O**n a recent Saturday night, Knesset Member Danny Dannon was invited by the Sephardic Community Alliance (SCA) to address community members at Congregation Mikdash Eliyahu. There, he outlined his plans for the future as an active Israeli statesman, and provided a personal account of the current state of global affairs.

Dannon, the Likud party chairman, represents many ideals that the SCA is proud to call their own. He is a former Deputy Minister of Defense, and works hard to raise awareness in the international community regarding Israel and the rights of the Jewish people. SCA President, Hymie Shamah, introduced Dannon as a "leader who believes in promoting the traditional values that have made this community great."

The address spanned from how to deal with ISIS to student activism on American campuses. He expressed a strong belief in Israel's strength as a nation, and of the importance of the Diaspora community in this context as well. "Leadership is about doing what's right for the Jewish people," he stated, "then you deal with the

polls, the media, and the left." He made further reference to the importance of youth-led initiatives in advocacy for the State and its defense. This point was in addition to an opening speech given by Victor Didia, a community college student who co-led an SCA sponsored Birthright trip. Didia emphasized the benefits of visiting Israel through Birthright and attending other SCA programs to prepare and inform today's youth.

Dannon went on to point out that the Middle East is a "tough neighborhood." Israel exists alongside increasing regional instability, and a potentially nuclear Iran. The MK illustrated how, in spite of its surroundings, Israel has managed to provide humanitarian aid to refugees. "We cut the border fence," Dannon explained, "to transport Syrian refugees to Israeli hospitals." It is the intention of Dannon to negate the call for a two state solution, and to defend Israel against potential military threats. He explained that technologies like the Iron Dome and newly launched satellites have allowed for a state of high security to be upheld.

One audience member asked Dannon to address rising concerns of anti-Semitism abroad and at home. In his answer, the MK spoke directly to the modern use of the term, "anti-Zionist." He explained that it is much easier to use that language, but the intentions of the phrase should not be missed. In answer to another



*MK Dannon with Prime Minister Netanyahu*

question regarding Iran he pointed out that the world must recognize that the "ingredients are on the counter" for nuclear capability, and that now is not the moment to sit idly by.

He stressed that he and the SCA share a common goal of establishing "a very real connection between the Syrian Jewish community and the state of Israel." Members of the SCA are currently up for election in the World Zionist Congress, and if elected, will have an opportunity to further their aims. On the ballot of the Zionist Organization of America, they stand to potentially have a platform to address world leaders. MK Dannon ended his speech with a sincere expression of thanks for the community's rare and unconditional support for the state of Israel. The SCA aims to make that support tangible. □



*MK Dannon, Rabbi M. Shamah, Alisa Sutton, Natalie Mizrachi and Murray Mizrachi*

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