

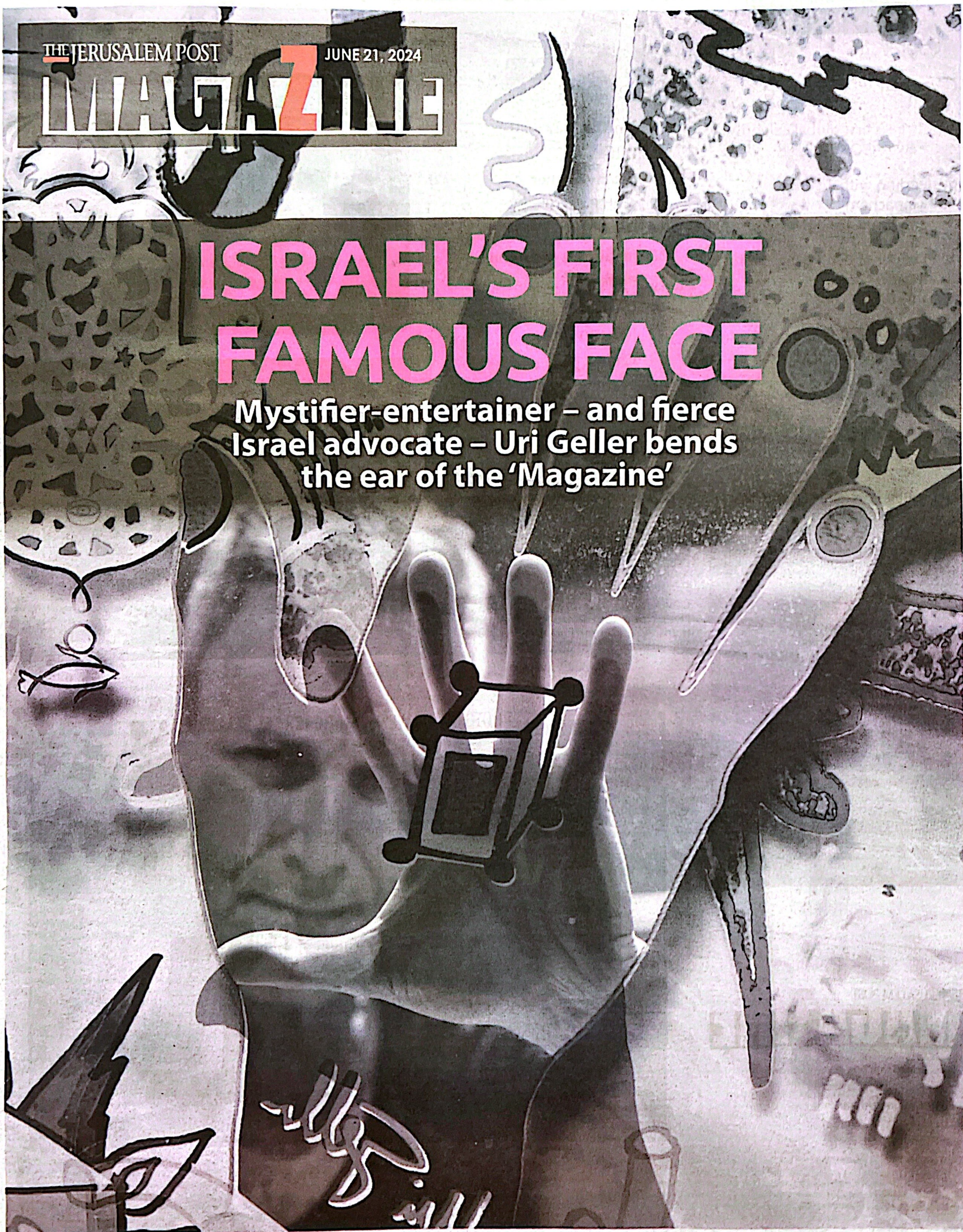
THE JERUSALEM POST

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MAGAZINE

# ISRAEL'S FIRST FAMOUS FACE

Mystifier-entertainer – and fierce  
Israel advocate – Uri Geller bends  
the ear of the 'Magazine'



COVER



URI GELLER: Spoon-bender, Israel advocate. (Photos: Sasha Gusov)

# Israel's first global celebrity

Mystifier-entertainer Uri Geller has been a spoon-bending global sensation for over five decades, promoting himself – and Israel – the entire time. He sits down with the 'Magazine' to discuss 'hasbara,' the war, celebrity antisemitism, soccer, and the secrets of his age-defying appearance

• AARON REICH

**W**ith over 50 years in the global public eye, Uri Geller is many things.

An acclaimed entertainer and performer, whose mystifying antics have captivated people around the world; a collector of treasures and oddities; and one of the only people in the world officially declared to have psychic powers, thanks to the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). However, Geller's career can be summed up in one word: Celebrity.

But he isn't just any ordinary celebrity. Born in Tel Aviv, the 77-year-old Geller was one of the first – if not the very first – Israelis to become a global entertainment icon.

"I'm Jewish, I'm Israeli," Geller told the *Magazine*. "Jewish families around the world were shocked when suddenly Uri Geller pops out of Israel and becomes famous all around the world for bending spoons and reading minds and doing amazing acts of telepathy."

Since he first left Israel for his career, the legendary spoon-bender has never stopped advocating for his home country. This includes engaging in public diplomacy, known in Hebrew as *hasbara*.

"I have been doing *hasbara* for Israel since I stepped on the plane in 1972 when I left Israel. I constantly try to promote Israel," he said. "But since the war [with Hamas] began, my efforts became a million times stronger."

Geller is no stranger to finding ways of staying in the public eye, from claiming to have contacted extraterrestrials to trying to use his alleged psychic powers to dislodge a ship stuck in the Suez Canal. He is no stranger to geopolitics either, having also voiced his views about the Ukraine-Russia War and once claiming he would use his powers to stop any Russian nuclear missile strike.

However, since the Israel-Hamas war began, Geller has become even more active with his media work, appearing regularly on the British news outlet GB News.

In this capacity, he has been vocal about the ongoing war in Gaza, as well as the upsurge in antisemitism around the world.

Even so, he still finds time for his other work, such as trying to use his powers to help out some teams in the UEFA EURO 2024 international soccer tournament.

With that in mind, we spoke with Geller in a wide-ranging interview about his opinions on everything from his *hasbara* work to his thoughts on the war, Euro, the US election, and – per the insistence of *Magazine* Editor Erica Schachne – the secrets of his seemingly eternal youth.

## Thoughts about the Israel-Hamas War

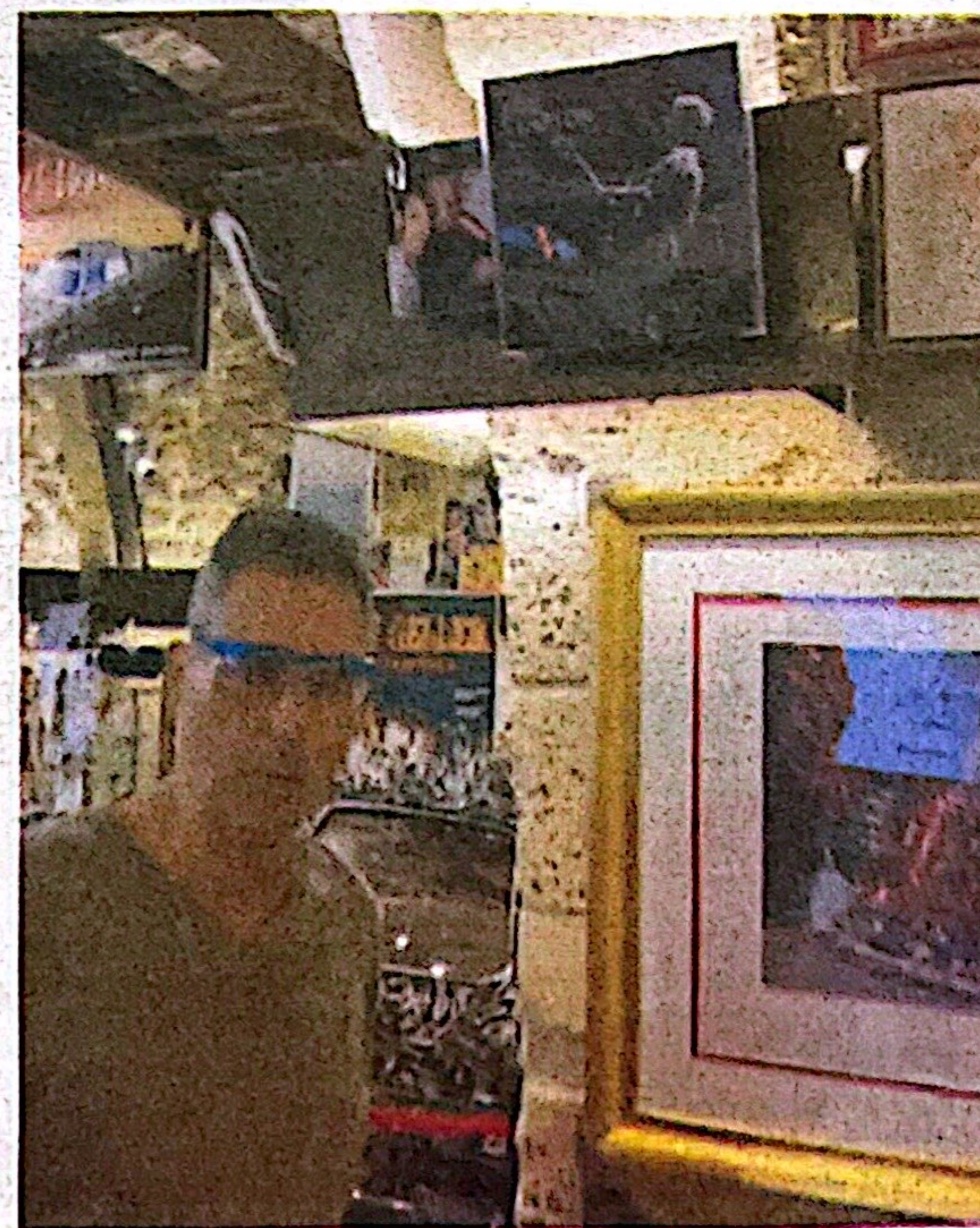
A former IDF soldier who served in the Six Day War, Geller, while not considering himself a political person, has long expressed his support for the IDF. That support has continued during the ongoing war with Hamas.

"I am a very patriotic person," he said. "I want every soldier and hostage to come home safe."

He also echoed the familiar claim that the IDF is a moral army and defended its conduct in Gaza.

"Every death in war is tragic, but we know the IDF goes out of its way to avoid civilian casualties, and Hamas operates among civilians," Geller said. "No war has ever been fought without civilian casualties. Show me one war that was!"

ERIC CLAPTON: 'Shame on you!'  
Clip from Geller's video in which he names and shames the musician (at L) for his anti-Israel comments, removing the Clapton memorabilia that has long hung on the wall of his eponymous museum.  
(Screenshot; Clapton: Gareth Cattermole/Gareth Cattermole/Getty Images)





US PRESIDENT Joe Biden during his Oct. 18 Israel visit: Geller compared Biden's hostage proposal to the infamous 1938 Munich Conference. (Miriam Alster/Pool/AFP via Getty Images)

While not commenting on domestic Israeli politics and how they relate to the war, Geller was far more opinionated and vocal about the United States, specifically the policies of US President Joe Biden.

"Biden has made the war difficult for Israel. He has delayed arm shipments, vital ones that we need to save innocent Palestinian lives, and he criticized Israel too much," Geller explained.

He further criticized Biden's proposed hostage deal for Israel and Hamas, which would see a ceasefire implemented and hostages returned home. The proposed deal was divisive, with many touting it as "flawed" but necessary, though others strongly disagreeing and saying the deal isn't worth it.

"The proposal Biden spoke about is a very bad deal for Israel," Geller said, comparing it to the infamous 1938 Munich Conference that saw the United Kingdom and France appeasing Nazi German leader Adolf Hitler following his demands to annex part of Czechoslovakia. "You might say, 'What's wrong with it? What's wrong with peace for hostages?'"

"Well, let me remind your *Jerusalem Post* readers... Do you remember a famous scene from 1938 when British prime minister Neville Chamberlain came back from negotiating with Hitler and declared 'Peace in our time'? Well, in my view, this proposal is a repeat of that moment. Biden's proposal lets Hamas off the hook. It lets Hamas survive to rebuild, re-arm, and attack Israel again."

This, for Geller, who has seen rockets fly above his home in Jaffa multiple times since Oct. 7, is a warning of the dangers Hamas poses.

"It's only a matter of time before we have another Oct. 7," he said.

#### The dangers of Iran

Echoing a point stressed by many experts, lawmakers, and military figures in Israel and abroad, Geller firmly believes that the biggest danger in the region isn't Hamas but Iran.

"Iran is the biggest danger in the world," he said. "It is behind all the instability in the Middle East, and it must be dealt with before it gets nuclear weapons. We must cut off the head of the snake."

The Islamic Republic has long been a veritable bogeyman of Middle East geopolitics, with its many proxy organizations as part of its Axis of Resistance long posing a threat to the security of Israel and the many moderate Sunni Arab nations in the region.

While this has mainly manifested in the form of proxy wars, Iran finally broke its typical more distant approach in April 2024 when it outright attacked the Jewish state. Dubbed by Iran as Operation True Promise, the unprecedented attack by Iran and its proxies in Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon saw over 300 drones, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles launched at the Jewish state overnight from April 13-14.

This was in response to an alleged Israeli airstrike on an Iranian embassy compound in Damascus on April 1, which killed two Iranian generals.

The Israeli defensive operation, called Operation Iron



APPEASER: BRITISH PM NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN heads to London's Houses of Parliament to discuss the results of the Munich Conference, Oct. 3, 1938. (Becker/Fox Photos/Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Shield, saw the cooperation of Israeli, American, British, French, and Jordanian forces to intercept the drones and missiles. Iron Shield was seen as a major success, with Israel claiming that 99% of missiles and drones were successfully intercepted.

However, Geller also claimed to have played an indirect role in this defensive operation.

"I can't go into detail because the operation was classified, but I played an indirect part in bringing down the Iranian drones that were used in the attack on Israel in April. I am not able to tell you how, but it is a fact," he asserted. "Now, of course, it was the IAF that did an unbelievable job – our brave pilots shot down these drones – but there were some systems that were used with my help. I am unable to tell you the extent of my involvement because I cannot talk about it, but yes, it is true."

### Antisemitism and the 2024 US presidential election

Out of concern for both rising antisemitism and Israel's ongoing war against Hamas, Geller explained that, in his opinion, whoever wins the 2024 US presidential elections needs to be tough on radical Islam.

"Whoever wins must be firm against radical Islam, which has taken root in universities in the US and Europe. We saw what happened on campuses, and it is not going away," he said.

Geller further stressed that the outcome of the election is incredibly important to Israel, and in his opinion, Donald Trump is a more reliable partner in this regard than Biden – whom Geller repeatedly criticized.

"I believe, and this is my opinion, that Trump understands us better, though of course he can be unpredictable. But, and this is totally my opinion, Biden doesn't know where he is, and he doesn't know who he is. [Former US president Barack] Obama is his handler," he explained.

"You see thousands of TikTok videos of Biden shaking hands in the air, and you can also see the video of Obama leading him off the stage. Sure, some of those may be faked, but come on. You have to be stupid to believe that Biden is running America! Get a life!"

Geller has also spoken out against antisemitism by other public figures, especially celebrities, the most notable of whom was classic rock legend Eric Clapton.

In late May, Clapton voiced his support for the pro-Palestinian protests on US campuses, equating the recent Senate

committee questions to presidents of universities about promoting antisemitism to the "Spanish Inquisition," blaming AIPAC, and saying that "Israel is running the world."

Geller, who had long been a fan of Clapton's and even had a signed copy of his album along with a picture of the two of them exhibited in his museum, was quick to criticize him.

"Shame on you, Eric! Shame on you!" Geller said in a video shared on social media. He pointed to the many musical icons whose works are on display in his museum before turning to the one of Clapton.

"You sided with evil over good! You're supporting murderers, people who chopped the heads off of babies, who raped women at a music festival! You are a musician! You f\*\*\*ing Eric Clapton! Shame on you!"

He then proceeded to take the album and picture off the wall and vowed to send it to the IDF for it to be destroyed in Gaza. "I can't believe you've done this! You're out!"

In the weeks since, Geller said that he is making good on his promise.

"I gave it [the album] to someone in Gush Etzion. They're going into Gaza, and I'll make sure a tank drives over the album and I'll take the shattered pieces and hang it back up in the museum," he said.

Other celebrities have been vocal about the Israel-Hamas war and antisemitism too, and Geller was critical of them as well.

"If you have millions of dollars and millions of followers, that comes with a big responsibility. It does not make you a political genius, and it does not make you a philosopher," he said. "So if you are a celebrity, be kind and be respectful and keep your views out of this tragic war."

### The hasbara battlefront

Geller has been a regular on GB News, with his videos being shared on YouTube and social media, accruing thousands of views every week.

This, he maintains, is incredibly important because Israel has long struggled to fight anti-Israel narratives on the Internet.

"The equation is very simple. There are over 1.7 billion Muslims around the world, and there are only 16 million or so Jews around the world," he said. "Once a child is hurt in Gaza tragically, terrorist supporters immediately flood the Internet and incite everyone. This is very hard for us to

*'I played an indirect part in bringing down the Iranian drones in April'*

## Supernatural soccer success?

Like billions of people around the world, Uri Geller is a big soccer fan. His museum has memorabilia from soccer legends such as Diégo Maradona, Cristiano Ronaldo, and England's national team that won the FIFA World Cup in 1966.

Even the soccer ball used in England's World Cup-winning game, today exhibited at a museum in Manchester, has only one signature on it – that of Uri Geller, though admittedly his name was misspelled, beginning with a Y instead of a U. "And I will not tell you how it got there!" he said.

A longtime supporter of England, Geller has also implored the British public to help him utilize "mind power" to help the English national team in games, the most recent example being in the 2022 FIFA World Cup, and before that in the 2020 Euro tournament.

However, Geller's most famous soccer spectacle was in a 1996 UEFA Euro match between England and Scotland when, supposedly, he flew in

a helicopter above Wembley Stadium and used his psychic powers to directly interfere with Gary McAllister's penalty kick, something that ultimately stopped Scotland from tying and

helped England win the match, with videos of the ball "moving" circulating on TV and since then online. However, today, Geller looks back on this as a mistake of his.



"It's okay to motivate and inspire footballers, but it's another thing to influence a match with real psychic powers," he said.

In 2024, Geller tried to use his alleged powers again, this time to help Scotland, using them on an ancient Scottish brick, a spoon that belonged to Scottish monarch Robert the Bruce, and a guitar signed by Taylor Swift. However, Scotland's performance in the 2024 Euro opening match was so bad, that even psychic powers didn't seem to be enough to save them.

He remarked: "I tried to help Scotland, but hey, they were awful!"

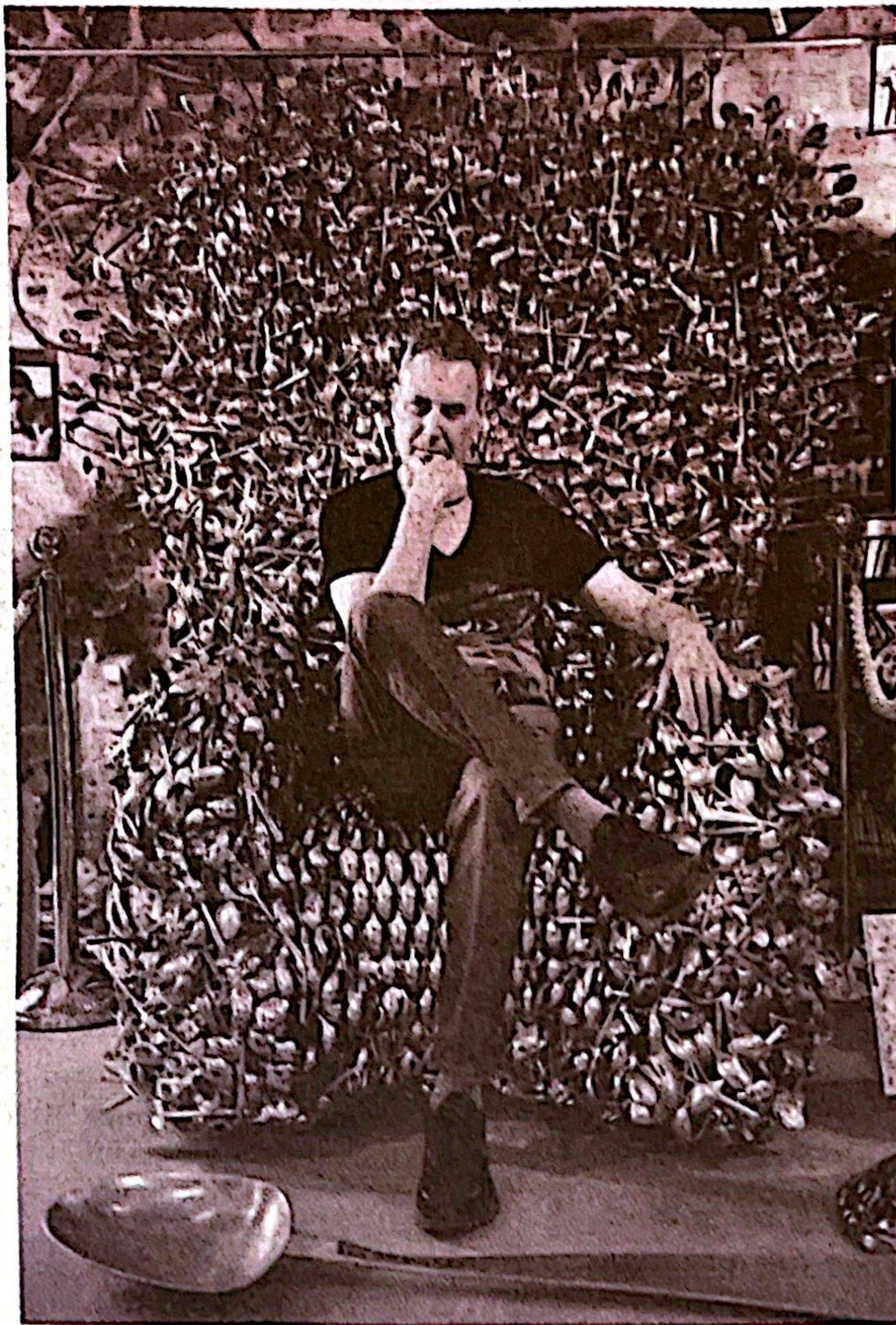
– A.R.

**MOST FAMOUS soccer spectacle:** Goalkeeper David Seaman of England saves a penalty from Gary McAllister of Scotland in the England v Scotland match of the 1996 UEFA Euro.

(Getty Images)

COINCIDENCE? AS Liat Collins, former editor of 'The International Jerusalem Post,' recalled of the spoon man: 'Many, many years ago he had a regular column reviewing sci-fi in 'Post' books pages. The week after it was stopped, that page – and that page alone – had inexplicable print problems.'

THE MAIN door of Geller's Tel Aviv museum, which he painted when he worked with Salvador Dali.



combat. [Especially when] lots of foreign media outlets are anti-Israel, with only a few like the *New York Post* taking a neutral view."

Israel's struggles with hasbara have long been a major issue, one that only worsened during the war.

Despite efforts of many dedicated government offices and spokespeople to help try to get Israel's message and narrative to the public, even the Jewish state's staunchest defenders will admit that Israeli public diplomacy is fighting a major uphill battle – one that it isn't exactly winning.

Recently, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that part of the reason for Israeli public diplomacy failures is because people "can't put two words together" in English,

with Netanyahu being one of the only Israeli public figures who can speak in smooth, fluent American English.

On this note, Geller agrees with the prime minister that better English skills are needed for this job.

"We need someone who is passionate about hasbara, who speaks English," he said. "It's all psychological, and I am an expert in this."

"We need people with charisma, who can eloquently explain in sharp English to the world the truth of what is really happening in Israel."

And while he said no one from the government has asked him, he is available and willing – after all, he's been doing it himself unprompted for over 50 years. ■

## 'Attitude of gratitude': The secrets of Geller's eternal youth

Anyone who has met Uri Geller may be surprised to know that despite his incredible energy, enthusiasm, and appearance, he is, in fact, 77 years old.

Despite his age, Geller doesn't seem a day over 50. Even at his museum, he leads the tours himself with a sense of youthful exuberance that many others far younger than him lack.

So what is his secret? Is it tied in to his claims of psychic powers?

According to the man himself, the answer is much simpler: Healthy living practices and a good attitude.

"I'm a vegan, I exercise, and I wake up every morning and put myself in an attitude of gratitude," he explained. "I've been married to the same woman for 55 years, I eat the right food, I take vitamins, and I walk wherever I can. I don't take elevators, I walk up stairs."

He also walks around with an

umbrella when outside in the sun. This is something he said many people make fun of him for, but it is a practice he defends.

"Sun damage is deadly," he said. "I try to keep away from it."

Editor Erica Schachne reacted: "Geller looks like he's in his late-50s! I'm glad to learn a bit about how the heck he does it."

"Certainly my attitude could do with an adjustment at times," she snickered.

"Sun protection is a must, but I doubt that when I hopefully get to his tender age, I will look two decades younger."

– A.R.

LIKE UK QUEEN CAMILLA (in Australia), when outside Geller uses an umbrella to shield himself from the sun. (Pictured: With then-prince Charles, 2015; Tracey Nearmy/Pool/Getty Images)

