

# MICHAEL FREUND SPEARHEADS DREIDEL INITIATIVE TO PRODUCE FIRST MANDARIN DREIDELS

*Shavei Israel, founder Michael Freund has developed the first-known dreidels bearing text in Mandarin for the Kaifeng Jewish population of Henan, China.*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, January 31, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Founder and chairman of Jerusalem-based [Shavei Israel](#), [Michael Freund](#), is proud to announce the success of the [Mandarin dreidel](#) initiative, undertaken during the recent celebration of Hannukah. Shavei Israel is a non-profit organization based in Jerusalem which helps Jewish populations throughout the world. In honor of the sacred Jewish holiday, Shavei Israel produced hundreds of dreidels marked with Mandarin text instead of the traditional Hebrew.

The first-of-its-kind program provided the unique dreidels to Jews living in Kaifeng, China as well as the 20 members of that community who have emigrated to Israel with help from Freund's organization. The province of Henan, where the city of Kaifeng is located, saw Jewish Iraqi merchants settle the area in the seventh or eighth century. The community thrived for hundreds of years until the 19th century, when the death of its last rabbi and the destruction of the synagogue saw the end of an active community.

Currently, approximately 1000 residents of Kaifeng have been identified through genealogy as descendants of that once-thriving Jewish community. "The beauty of a living link between the Jewish people and China is alive and well in these descendants," says Freund. "Our goal was to celebrate the heritage they've lost and are eager to rediscover, despite heavy restriction on the part of the Chinese government. Through the simple gift of a Chinese-language dreidel, we hope to continue forging relationships and bringing light to the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng."

Michael Freund founded Shavei Israel to assist hidden Jewish communities in aliyah—a return to Zion. Born in New York, Mr. Freund has spent the last 25 years living in Israel and serving the Jewish community through his journalistic contributions to local periodicals and working to extend the reach of Shavei Israel. With this newest initiative, he has taken another step in the quest to unite the global Jewish community.

Michael Freund is an ordained rabbi and holds his MBA in Finance from Columbia University. He served as the Deputy Communications Director for Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu and is a syndicated columnist for Israel's largest English language periodical.

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For more information about Michael Freund and his organization, Shavei Israel, please visit <https://www.shavei.org/>. You can also find him on LinkedIn.

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