

NEWVISION PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

THE WANDERER WHO KNEW IT ALL

# THE SHOSHANI RIDDLE

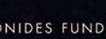


A film by

**Michael Grynszpan**



Produced and directed by Michael Grynszpan    Editor Roi Ben Ami    Animation David Walz  
Design Noa Haber    Director of Photography Philippe Bellaiche  
Original Music Daniel Markovich    Sound design Michael Goorevich    Colorist Hester Berrobi



# The Shoshani Riddle

Israel 2024 | 88 min. / Feature Documentary

Written and Directed by: **MICHAEL GRYSZPAN**

Produced by: NEW VISION PRODUCTIONS

Editing: ROY BEN AMI

Cinematography: PHILIPPE BELLAICHE

Animation: DAVID WALZ

Music: DANIEL MARKOVITCH

Sound Design: MICHAEL GOOREVICH

Cast : ELIE WIESEL, ADIN STEINSALTZ, SERGE KLARSFELD

Supported by: KAN 11, THE SECOND ISRAELI AUTHORITY FOR TELEVISION & RADIO, GESHER FILM FOUNDATION - AVI CHAI FOUNDATION, THE YEHOSHUA RABINOVICH FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS, MATANEL FOUNDATION, LA FONDATION DU JUDAISME FRANCAIS, CLAIMS CONFERENCE

Broadcaster: KAN 11

[ DCP | Hebrew, English, French with English Subtitles ]

The film has Hebrew, French and English versions.

Market Premiere | **Berlinale EFM 2024**

"A cult movie" (Hannah Brown, the Jerusalem Post)

Won the Award for **best documentary of the year**  
by the association of Film critics in Israel.



# The Shoshani Riddle

## Logline

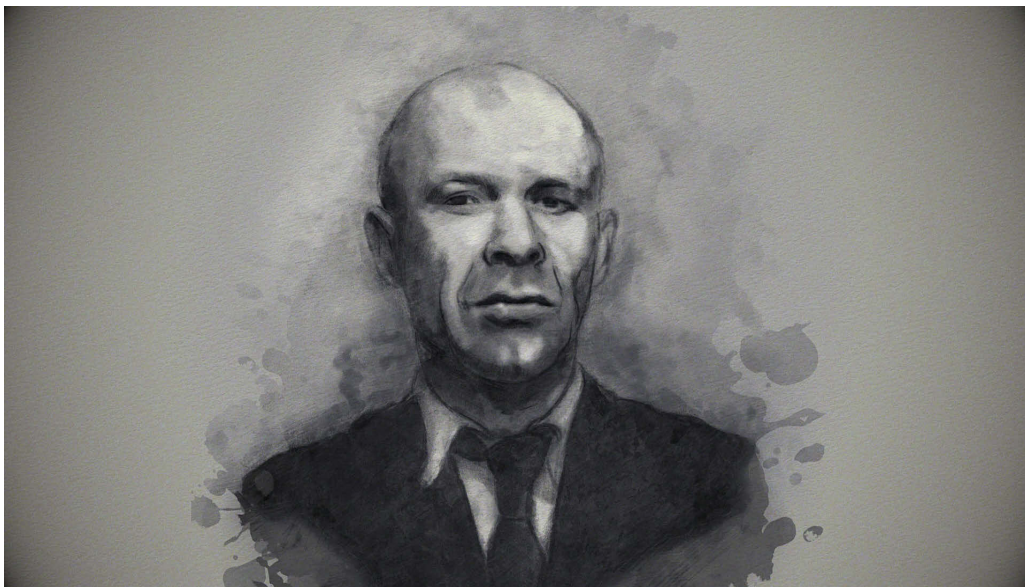
**The Wanderer Who Knew it All.**

**He was one of the greatest geniuses that ever lived; a teacher, a scholar, a mathematician - he had a brilliant mind...and yet he slept on a park bench, had no real home, travelled the world, looked like a bum and ate like a slob. No one knows his real name; he is only known as Mr. Shoshani. Mr. Shoshani is one of the unsolved riddles and one of the ten most mysterious men ever.**

## Synopsis

He was one of the greatest geniuses that ever lived; a teacher, a scholar, a mathematician - he had a brilliant mind...and yet he slept on a park bench, had no real home, travelled the world, looked like a bum and ate like a slob.

No one knows his real name; he is only known as Mr. Shoshani. He was an eternal nomad, a mad genius, who attracted disciples such as Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel and renowned philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. He was fluent in 30 languages, knew philosophy, physics, economics, biology and other disciplines. With no family or friends, wandering homeless in shabby clothes, taking on multiple names and identities, he acquired a mythological status – some claim he was merely a legendary figure. How did he acquire his extensive knowledge? What is the source of the great wealth left after his death? What was his world view? Why was his secret? Mr. Shoshani is one of the unsolved riddles and one of the ten most mysterious men ever. This is his story.



## Director's Note

This movie looks like a mystical thriller about a ghost but it is a documentary.

Mr. Shoshani [or "Chouchani" in French] is only a nickname, no one knows until today what was his real identity. I made extensive research around the world for this movie, interviewed hundreds of people who knew him (including the last known interview of Elie Wiesel in New York), and I found many new elements about this exceptional man.

When I set out to make *The Shoshani Riddle*, I thought I was telling the story of a mysterious historical figure—an eccentric genius who mentored Elie Wiesel and left behind a trail of riddles, myths, and half-glimpsed truths. What I didn't expect was how personal the journey would become.

This film quickly moved beyond biography. It became a deeply personal, almost spiritual, search for meaning. Mr. Shoshani's elusive identity mirrored my own questions about knowledge, belief, and the human need to understand what resists understanding. The more I uncovered, the more I realized that this wasn't just a documentary—it was a philosophical investigation into the limits of memory and the nature of legacy.

That *The Shoshani Riddle* became a cult success in Israel was both humbling and unexpected. I believe audiences connected with the film not only because of the mystery it presents, but because of the universal longing at its core: the search for truth in an ambiguous world.

My hope is that *The Shoshani Riddle* resonates beyond its cultural context—as a story that invites viewers everywhere to reflect on the mysteries that shape us, and the questions that outlive answers.

**Michael Grynszpan**



## Press Reviews

Got a **viral success** in the public and became a **cult movie** in Israel: they opened dozens of new screenings at the cinema theaters all over the country.

Won the **Award for best documentary of the year** by the association of Film critics in Israel.

# THE SHOSHANI RIDDLE

"The Shoshani Riddle has become a **cult movie**"

Hannah Brown, The Jerusalem Post

"So **extraordinary** that your jaw is almost guaranteed to drop several times while watching the film"

Erez Dvora, Ynet

"A film like no other, it's like one of those rare things that makes you say: 'What is this thing?' There's even a chance it could be a huge hit worldwide"

Kobi Oz, Reshet Bet

"It plays out like a **metaphysical detective story**"

Etan Nechin, Haaretz

"It's an **amazing** film"

Nadav Halperin, Kan Tarbut

"More **suspenseful** than any Agatha Christie adaptation"

Yael Shuv, Time Out

"When I reached the end of the film, I had a burst of **inspiration**"

Iris Kol, 103FM

"Run to see it, it is a **masterpiece**"

Dr. Roy Yosevitch

"There is a filmmaker here who, in terms of his **passion**, is now directing Game of Thrones. No less"

Lior Ben Ari, Ynet

"I watched it **captivated** and experienced it as powerful"

Marlyn Wenig, Portfolio



WWW.CHOUCHANI.COM

## Director's Biography & Filmography

**MICHAEL GRYSZPAN** Born and raised in France, Michael Grynszpan studied high mathematics and philosophy in Paris. When he moved to Israel, he studied Film and Television at Tel-Aviv University, Production Track. After university, he began to work as Journalist-Reporter for various TV channels and then launched - and served as CEO - a TV Production Company with three partners. This company produces until today reports and documentary films. Some of those films got an international distribution.

2024 **"The Shoshani Riddle"** Director, 88 minutes, for Israeli Channel Kan11. A documentary movie about one of the most mysterious men ever, a wanderer, a genius, a legend.



2023 **"Manitou, the renewed speech"** Director, 78 min documentary film about famous thinker Leon Ashkenazi, whose nickname was Manitou, born in Algeria, who had a great impact in France and Israel. Screened in Israel, France and Canada.

2018 **"Once upon a time Israel"**, 52 min, producer, a documentary directed by Serge Moati for France 5, about the history of Israel for its 70th anniversary.

2017 **"History of the Jewish Scouts of Morocco - EIM"** Director, about a special youth movement that had an impact on the Jewish community in Morocco. 65 min.

2014 **"Out of the Spectrum"** Director of a short documentary movie about autism for Israeli TV Channel 10.

2012 **"Toulouse between pink and grey"** Director documentary 26 min for Israel Channel 1 – Arutz1 about the Jewish community in Toulouse, France, a film that is trying to understand how Jews in Toulouse cope with the situation after a bloody terrorist attack in a Jewish school in the city.

2012 **“Méditerranéennes”** Director Assistant to Serge Moatti. France 2. A documentary about women and their influence in Mediterranean countries.

2010-2011 **“Descendants of Nazis: An Infernal Legacy”** (**“Descendants de Nazis: L’héritage infernal”**) – Director , co-directed with Marie-Pierre Rimbault - a 82 minutes documentary for France Television (France3), about the nazi descendants who converted to Judaism and are living in Israel. Is it out of guilt? How do you go about shaping your own identity in this day and age when your surname is Goering, Goebbels, or Himmler? This documentary had a strong impact and was broadcasted internationally: in France, Belgium, Italy, Poland, Israel, China, etc. Distributed by ARTE, it is now available on AmazonTV PRIME and AppleTV.

2008 Directed a **short documentary series** – five films, 10 minutes each - portraying important personalities in the education’s field in Israel: Professor Beno Gross, Esther and Salomon Abitbol, Miriam Barkai, Professor Judit Liwerant (including filming in Mexico) and Professor Arcady Kovelman (including filming in Russia). Screened during two special big events in Jerusalem.

2007 **“L’affaire Finaly”** Director Assistant – a documentary written by Noel Mamere and Alain Moreau – directed by David Korn-Brzoza. Broadcast on France3 and France2.

2005-2007 **“The Forgotten Refugees”** – Director. Award Winning Documentary about the history of Jews from Arab Countries. 48 minutes. Translated in 7 languages and screened all over the world. This documentary won the Prize for best documentary at the Marbella International Film Festival and at the Jewish Film Festival in Warsaw. Broadcasted twice on Israel Channel 1 (Arutz1) and in many other countries. Broadcasted on the PBS network all over America, PBS California, PBS New York, PBS Virginia, PBS Florida, etc.

A special screening of “The Forgotten Refugees” also took place at the UN in Geneva, another time at the UN in New York and at the American Congress in Washington DC on June 19, 2007.



## Contact

### Michael Grynspan

108 Levi Eshkol St.

Tel Aviv

[contactfilmchouchani@gmail.com](mailto:contactfilmchouchani@gmail.com)

[www.chouchani.com](http://www.chouchani.com)

