



## Parisian Jewish delivery boy meets the Pope



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I have experienced hundreds of adventures thanks to this work which was an incredibly positive experience. I met people from all social backgrounds and always with surprising stories. I love living random stories, discover new things and, above all, meet new fascinating people. It is precisely this curiosity and this passion for meeting people that led me to a unique experience: my invitation to the Vatican.



Hello, my name is Elon, I just turned 24 and I'm going to tell you some anecdotes about my life. It feels strange to write a biography when I am, hopefully, only at the beginning of my life.

I prefer to listen to other people's stories or tell them orally but I promised to write one, so I honour this promise:

At the age of 14-15, I was a student in a small local high school which did not have many sports structures and the PE teacher at the time wanted us to go swimming.

As we do not have a swimming pool available nearby, we have to go to the outskirts of Paris. This is how we usually left every Friday morning to do our swimming session and walk back to our high school, which must have taken us 40 minutes, given that we were tired from the sports session that we just did.

On the way, we passed every week in front of this Italian restaurant which delivers pizzas. This is a pizzeria chain that is not very well known.

One Friday, my friend and I passed again in front of this pizzeria which displayed on its door: "Recruiting delivery person". We were barely of legal working age and we did not have the license needed to drive scooters but we found it funny to apply the same evening in the somewhat crazy hope of earning a little pocket money.

At the time, I was already working in the synagogues of my parents (who are liberal rabbis) and I was already collecting a little money.

Mainly, it was my friend who wanted to start earning a living.

We created our first CVs and, as they were very empty, decided to embellish them a bit. We both put work experiences of 12 years in different bicycle delivery companies.

The irony is that the company I chose had only existed for 2 years and could not match what I had marked on my CV.

The following week I received a call from a number starting with a 07, which, at the time was often associated with young people. The person on the other end of the line begins to introduce themselves as the owner of the pizzeria chain who would like to interview me. I thought it was a scam but I played along.

I showed great motivation during the interview and when the fateful question arrives, that of verifying my past experiences, I did not flinch and I improvised at the very moment an answer that seemed entirely plausible to him about the internal organization of this company.

And so he invited me to do a trial day.

I went there after classes, with no GPS and thus arrive in a neighbourhood that I don't know about an unknown job.

It was then that the manager who greeted me announced that it was his last day of work.

He explained to me how to work but is interrupted by an order from a customer.

He informs me that it's my turn and gives me the keys to the scooter.

Seeing that I am distraught, he asks me if this is my first time driving.

and I stammer...

Not being fooled, he calmly explains to me how to start the scooter.

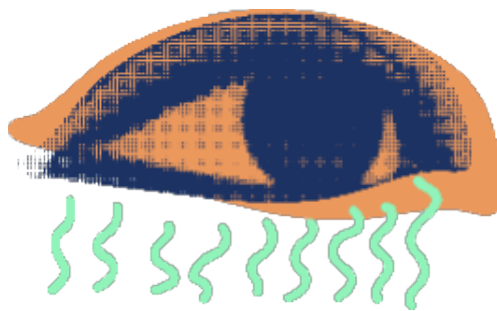
This is how I find myself deciphering the names of the streets to find my way and deliver my first pizza on a scooter that I didn't know how to drive.

Back from my trial day, the new manager recruits me and offers me my first contract.

And then, it was time for me to announce to my parents that I had my first official job.

I have experienced hundreds of adventures thanks to this work which was an incredibly positive experience for me. I met people from all social backgrounds with many surprising stories.

Why did you tell this particular story? Because I love living stories random, discover new things and, above all, meet new fascinating people.



It is precisely this curiosity and this passion for meeting people that led me to a unique experience: my invitation to the Vatican.

I grew up in the liberal Jewish youth movement which in France called Netzer. Since both my parents are liberal rabbis, it seemed only natural. Except that this youth movement had just been created in France, so anything was possible!

After seeing American summer camps, my parents had the good idea to replicate this model in France, with a French touch of course!

Discussions from evening to morning with the teams of facilitators on our values and their implementation in place, combined with moments of laughter, joy, kindness and complicity motivated me to get personally involved in this movement.

This youth movement has become a family for me, even if some members were already officially my family.

This is how from hanikh, I became a facilitator then group leader then director.

Each of these steps was important to me and taught me invaluable lessons.

My commitment led me to discover the other branches of the Netzer movement at “Veida” by Netzer Olami, the gathering of around twenty people each coming from different countries to exchange experiences and good practices. In these meetings we realized that although our traditions might be different, we had the same values and issues.

This is how the feeling of family grew for everyone, and we knew that we had a base in all our respective countries.

Working in a liberal Jewish youth movement means working with communities of liberal Jews. Quickly, we saw up close the expression “2 Jews, 3 synagogues”. You have to navigate between different communities, who sometimes don't want to work together. I had and still have the wish to overcome these quarrels and to bring youth together on “neutral” ground which is Netzer.

The World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ), the great union on which Netzer Olami depends has nearly 2 million members, including all the French liberal communities. They recognize the efforts and value the work done at Netzer France and the Mahanetzer youth camp.

In May 2023, I was elected to the Executive Board of WUPJ, where I act as a representative of the young leaders and as a bridge between the French-speaking communities and English speakers.

I now had to demonstrate diplomacy not only for the French liberal communities but also for others!

When we are at the WUPJ executive office, we have online meetings at improbable times so that representatives of each country can connect.

May 2024 was our first face-to-face meeting in Rome, Italy. In fact, we were celebrating the 10th anniversary of the liberal community of Rome.

The week was full of surprises organized by the community for the executive office.

However, it was the Vatican that surprised us the most because the members of the office were invited to attend a short audience with the Pope.

There was an interpreter for the English speakers. However, no one from the office spoke to him in English and everyone spoke to him in Spanish in a completely fluent manner.

Thanks to my beginner Spanish, gleaned during my trip to Argentina, I was able not to completely lose face.

So I received a papal medal, exchanged laughter and politeness and told him a story.

I had the honour of hearing his private joke in French!

