

## MEET OUR AMBASSADORS



**Shai Gabay**  
Associate Professor

Head of the Institute of Information Processing and  
Decision Making (IIPDM)  
School of Psychological Sciences  
*Faculty of Social Sciences*

**Field of Research:** Evolutionary Cognitive

### **SHORT BIO**

I am an Associate Professor at the School of Psychological Sciences and my research focuses on the fascinating ways our brains process information and make decisions. After completing my Ph.D. under Prof. Avishai Henik at Ben-Gurion University, I pursued postdoctoral research at Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh, USA) under Prof. Marlene Behrmann. Upon joining the University of Haifa, I was honored with the prestigious Alon Fellowship for young faculty by the Israeli Council for Higher Education. Currently, I serve as the head of the Institute of Information Processing and Decision Making (IIPDM), where I lead a dynamic team dedicated to unraveling the mysteries of the human brain's evolutionary development.

The human brain's remarkable abilities stem from a complex interplay between ancient and modern regions. While cortical expansion is often credited with boosting cognition throughout evolution, our research challenges this singular focus. Our lab delves into the critical role of subcortical structures, often considered less sophisticated, in higher-order thinking. This focus on conserved evolutionary mechanisms could redefine our understanding of what makes us cognitively unique. In my free time, I love to spend time with my wife and three girls. I also enjoy playing the drums with my band and do stand-up comedy.

### **FUNDRAISING NEEDS**

The Institute of Information Processing and Decision Making (IIPDM) at the University of Haifa is a collaborative research institute focused on unraveling the mysteries of human cognition. Our interdisciplinary approach employs various research methods, from animal models to brain imaging, to address a wide range of topics. With 13 principal investigators and over 70 students, we operate on a "research kibbutz" model, pooling resources for optimal utilization. This structure fosters fruitful collaborations and enables us to conduct cutting-edge research. Beyond our scientific pursuits, we prioritize training the next generation of Israeli scientists, providing them with the support and resources needed to excel and contribute to the scientific community.