

# MODI

IS RUNNING ON

# Moshiach Energy

Antisemitism has changed, the comedian Mordechi Rosenfeld—who goes by Modi—alleges in his latest stand-up special, *Know Your Audience*. “Back in the day, you saw a guy with a yarmulke on him, you punched him,” goes the set-up. “Today, it’s not original anymore.” As a gay Orthodox Jew, Modi uses his act to spear Jewish stereotypes, marriage and millennials, proving any part of one’s personality can be mined for a good laugh. There’s a lot of material—his non-Jewish husband is also his manager—but fortunately, his queerness hasn’t been as much at odds with his Or-

thodox faith as one might have expected.

Born in Tel Aviv in 1970, Modi moved with his family to the United States at the age of seven, later majoring in psychology and minoring in voice at Boston University. He briefly worked in finance before entering the world of comedy, where he built up a Jewish—mostly Orthodox—fan base, becoming a mainstay of Passover programs, nonprofit fundraisers and synagogue galas. His comedy lovingly skewers elements of the Jewish community, including differences between Ashkenazim and Sephardim, Shabbat elevators and sleepaway camps. As COVID

shutdowns shuttered venues, his viral comedy clips grew his audience exponentially and led to his headlining comedy shows around the world. Modi was in Israel on October 7, and since then he has asked his audience to stand and sing the national anthem of Israel after every show. “I tell them we’ve just healed and become a community in this room through laughter. And to remind ourselves where our hearts, our souls, our prayers are, let’s sing ‘Hatikvah’ together.” *Moment’s* Jacob Forman spoke with Modi about acceptance within the Orthodox community, anti-Israel sentiment online and “*Moshiach* energy.”

*The gay, married Orthodox comedian is serious about Judaism, inclusion and making you laugh.*

