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By JTA, REUTERS *06/07/2015 04:00*

American Pharoah, owned by orthodox Jew from Egypt, wins horse racing triple crown

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Ahmed Zayat, owner of the winning horse American Pharoah, grew up in a wealthy suburb of Cairo, where his father was Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's doctor.

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Victor Espinoza, celebrates atop American Pharoah #5, after winning the 147th running of the Belmont Stakes at Belmont Park. (photo credit:AL BELLO / GETTY IMAGES NORTH AMERICA / AFP)

ELMONT, New York - American Pharoah entered the pantheon of US thoroughbred racing's all-time greats by winning the Belmont Stakes on Saturday to become the first horse to capture the coveted Triple Crown in nearly four decades.

In winning his seventh straight race, American Pharoah becomes the 12th horse to sweep the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes and the first since Affirmed in 1978.

According to JTA, a win was a triumphant stand for Ahmed Zayat, an Orthodox Jew from Egypt who has become one of the biggest


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forces in horse racing but has mostly tasted bitter defeat in recent years.

Before American Pharoah's victories last month, Zayat had watched horses he owned finish second in the Kentucky Derby three out of the last four years. In 2012, horses owned by Zayat finished second in each of the three Triple Crown races – the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness Stakes and the Belmont Stakes.

In his history-making attempt, American Pharoah may have some Jewish luck in his favor. Jockey Victor Espinoza, who is not Jewish, visited the Lubavitcher rebbe's grave on Thursday in Cambria Heights, New York, in the borough of Queens, where he prayed and presumably asked for good luck.

Ahmed Zayat grew up in a wealthy suburb of Cairo, where his father was Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's doctor.

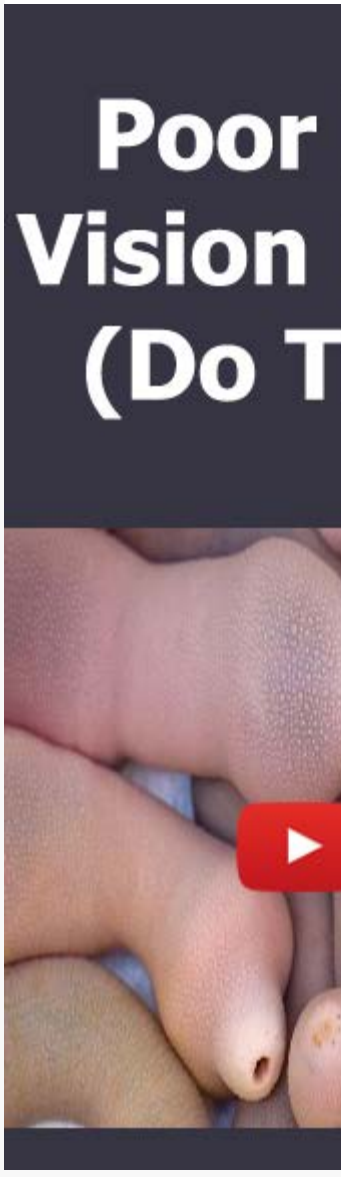
As a young teenager, Zayat won the under-12 and under-14 national show jumping championships in Egypt (a once-thriving Jewish community, though fewer than 40 Jews remain in the country today).

After graduating from Yeshiva University, Zayat worked for the haredi Orthodox real estate developer Zev Wolfson, a wealthy real estate entrepreneur and major Jewish philanthropist.

Zayat returned to Egypt in 1995 and formed an investment group that bought the newly privatized Al Ahram Beverages company. Zayat helped turn the company around by introducing Fayrouz – a non-alcoholic blend of malt, fruit and sparkling water – into its line of products. In 2002, Zayat sold the company to Heineken for $280 million.



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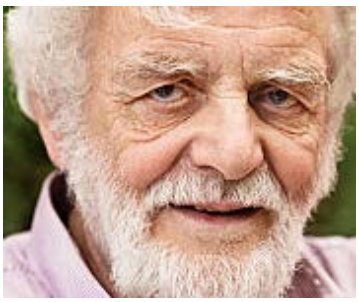
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