

# Tefilla Notebook

3 Shevat • Va'era

**Steven Dorfman, President • Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi • Rabbi Aryeh Perlstein, Assistant Rabbi**

This week's Tefilla Notebook is sponsored by **Richard & Helen Weston** in memory of Richard's father, **Sydney Weston z"l**, whose yahrtzeit is on the 29th of Tevet.



Dear Members and Friends,

This week, the anti-Israel show trial in The Hague exploded onto the public consciousness. Israel scrambled to get a judge onto the panel and has sent representatives to advocate Israel's position. As I watched the spectacle unfold, I was reminded of the prescient words of Vladimir Zev Jabotinsky, published in 1912 during the

blood-libel trial of Mendel Beilis in Kiev. Jabotinsky was a proud Jewish patriot fed up with the cowering apologetics of the "Galut" (exile) Jew. As a Zionist activist, he spearheaded a Jewish identity reformation that was unapologetically unapologetic.

"Who are we, that we must make excuses to them?" Jabotinsky thundered, in an essay appropriately titled No Apologies. "And who are they, to interrogate us? What is the purpose of this mock trial over the entire people where the sentence is known in advance? Our habit of constantly and zealously answering to any rabble has already done us a lot of harm and will do much more. The situation that has been created as a result, tragically confirms the well-known saying: 'he who apologizes – condemns himself.'"

"Once again, we have taken on the role of prisoners on trial – we press our hands to our hearts, and with quivering fingers, we leaf through old stacks of supporting documents that no one is interested in ... How much longer will this go on? Tell me, my friends, are you not already tired of this charade? Isn't it high time, in response to all these accusations, rebukes, suspicions, smears, and denunciations – both present and future – to fold our arms over our chests and loudly, clearly, coldly, and calmly put forth the only argument that this public can understand: why don't you all go to hell?"

Jabotinsky could well have written these words in January 2024, about the genocide case against Israel being brought by South Africa at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). As the week progressed, I found the circus developing in The Hague so disturbing that I decided to visit the Auschwitz Exhibition at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, just to remind myself what happens to Jews when they don't take the threats against them seriously. The exhibition – which features 700 original artifacts along with a curated account of the role of Auschwitz in the Final Solution – has been open for months but is winding up its run at the end of January.

I'd heard it was terrific – well put together and very evocative – but until this week, I didn't feel the need to visit, having read countless books and seen countless documentaries on the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jewish people in what would later become known as the Holocaust. In addition to which, besides for having personally been acquainted with dozens of Auschwitz survivors, some years ago I visited the original site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in Poland. So, I thought to myself: "Been there, done that."

But events over the past few weeks, and particularly this week, have been a seismic shock to the system. As Ronald Reagan once put it,

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free." At no time that I can recall have these words been more relevant – and not just for the United States, but for the entire free world.

Clearly, the need to challenge vicious tyrants and to protect ourselves against terrorists has not been passed from the previous generation into the bloodstream of the emerging generation. And the results are evident for all to see – Gen Z is utterly besotted with freedom-hating thugs, and is seemingly intent on painting anyone who challenges these thugs as the enemy. Mix into that equation the oldest hatred – antisemitism – and you have a perfect storm. The popular mantra among the younger generation is as simple as it is pernicious: Israel is evil, Palestinians can do no evil, and if you dare call us antisemites for saying so, that proves you are the oppressor.

In broad terms, I didn't learn very much that I didn't already know at the Auschwitz exhibition. Of the 1.1 million Jews who entered Auschwitz between 1942 and 1944, 900,000 were murdered almost immediately – first they were gassed to death, and then their bodies were incinerated. The victims represented a broad cross-section of Jewish society – young, old, men, women, boys, girls, rich, poor, religious, secular, educated, uneducated. There was literally nothing that could save you from getting killed, although if you were in your teens or twenties, you might get a short reprieve. Young men and women were separated out from the vast majority of those who arrived, to be used as slave laborers, and some of them did manage to survive Auschwitz's brutal conditions until they were liberated by Russian forces in January 1945.

But the exhibition did offer me some glimpses into the personal tragedies of individual Holocaust victims and their families. There was a section about the prewar Jewish community of Oswiecim – the Polish name for Auschwitz. Oswiecim Jewry had thrived during the interwar years. One story, about the Haberfeld family of Oswiecim, was especially tragic. In August 1939, Alfons Haberfeld and his wife Felicja, who had a business producing alcoholic beverages, traveled to New York to showcase their products at the World Fair. While on their way home, Germany invaded Poland, and the return journey was abruptly halted as their ship rerouted to Scotland, preventing their return to Poland, which was now under German occupation.

The Haberfelds' five-year-old daughter, Franciszka, was not with them – she had been left in her grandmother's care while her parents were on their business trip. The Haberfelds never saw Franciszka again. In 1942, both she and her grandmother were murdered by the Nazis in the Bełżec death camp. Alfons and Felicja eventually made their way to the United States, and in 1952 were instrumental in establishing a community organization in Los Angeles for Holocaust survivors called Club 1939. Alfons died in 1970, and Felicja died in 2010.

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**FRIDAY, JAN 12th**  
4:46 PM CANDLELIGHTING  
4:50 PM KABBALAT SHABBAT  
**SATURDAY, JAN 13th**  
8:30 AM GEMARA SHIUR  
9:15 AM SHACHARIT  
4:55 PM MINCHA  
5:45 PM MAARIV  
5:46 PM SHABBAT ENDS

## WEEKDAY DAVENING

Sun	8:00am	4:55pm
Mon-Thur	7:00am	4:55pm
Fri	7:00am	4:55pm

**BRING THEM HOME NOW**

## THANK YOU

Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by **Famarz and Sheilagh Sadeghi** in memory of Famarz's father, **Daniel Sadeghi, Daniel ben Yaakov z"l**, whose yahrtzeit is on the 7th of Shevat

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The Haberfelds were no doubt conscious of the threat from Hitler, and of the likelihood of a German invasion, when they left for New York. The Nazi hatred for Jews had already wrought havoc on the German, Austrian, and Czech Jewish communities, as evidenced by the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 1938, which had resulted in dozens of state-sanctioned killings of Jews. And yet, life went on, and the threat was dismissed or minimized, or willfully ignored. By the time European Jewry woke up, it was far too late – and the result was: Auschwitz. Just like today, those who hated Jews used legal means and formal institutions to present Jews as evil, clearing the way for an outcome that remains the most significant attempt to wipe out a nation in human history.

Currently, at every synagogue around the world, we are reading through the Torah portions in Exodus that recall the story of the first attempt to delegitimize, enslave, and wipe out the Jews. Pharaoh, the world's most powerful leader, became convinced that Jews represented a grave threat to Egyptian civilization. Demoralized and dispirited, the Jews of that era were almost annihilated. But Moses came, and he stood up to the tyranny of Pharaoh, who no doubt represented the feelings of the majority. Moses didn't care – he was unapologetically proud of his people and of his heritage, and he refused to be cowed, even when Pharaoh stubbornly persisted with his cruelty.

Just like Pharaoh, the world has hardened its heart against Israel. From the ICJ in The Hague, to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Israel is vilified – and as a result, Jews are in existential danger yet again. But we have nothing to be ashamed of. Indeed, we can be proud of who we are and what we represent. The end of all this will be a triumph of truth over lies, and the Jewish people will prevail – as they have throughout history. Until then, we must stay strong, and we must certainly never apologize.

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Pini Dunner

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

RONNIE  
SCHWARTZ

GINETTE  
HODARA

MICHAEL  
SCHLOSS

NORA HOLTZ

MARK SAMUEL

DANIEL  
KELLERMAN

NICOLE WIZMAN NORA SOROUDI

JJ WALLACK

Next week's Parsha Shiur is sponsored by **Aaron & Lillian Fuchs and Jason Fuchs** in memory of Aaron's Sister and Jason's Aunt **Shaindle Gutman, Shaindle Gittle bat Chaim Shaul a"h** whose Yahrtzeit is on 11 Shevat.

## Yahrtzeits

### Bernat Block

Menachem Dov ben Itzchak  
Aryeh z"l

Father of

### Eva Feldberg

Yahrtzeit - 5 Shevat

### Daniel Sadeghi

Daniel ben Yaakov z"l

Father of

### Faramarz Sadeghi

Yahrtzeit - 7 Shevat

### Chana Gromis

Chana bat Moshe Yehudah  
HaCohen a"h

Mother of

### Ed Gromis

Yahrtzeit - 7 Shevat



If you  
would  
like to  
join the

Mincha/Maariv  
WhatsApp Group,  
please send a  
message to the  
Rabbi on  
WhatsApp at  
310-499-3407

Need Piano Lessons?  
Call Dr. Yakov Birman  
310-467-4045

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Daniel & Jasmin Parsi

## MAZAL TOV



Harry Finkel's Double Simcha  
Adam Chaviv's Engagement to **Eliana Rivka**. Mazel Tov to parents **Shevy & Asher Ogorek & Bonnie & Norm Kurnick**

A new Great Grandson to **Talia & Eli Weintraub**. Mazel Tov to Grandparents **Bonnie & Norm Kurnick & Debbie & David Weintraub**



# SOLIDARITY TRIP TO ISRAEL



## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

### Dedication ceremony of YINBH Nahal Haredi apartment

Visit wounded IDF soldiers in the hospital, with gifts

Visit kibbutzim affected by the October 7th massacres

Host a BBQ for soldiers at an army base

Meet with released hostages and their families

Volunteer with packing and distributing essential needs

Meet with government officials & dignitaries

### COST: \$1200 PER PERSON

PARTICIPANTS WILL ARRANGE THEIR OWN TRAVEL TO ISRAEL, LODGING & TRAVEL INSURANCE.

Includes transportation within Israel, security, site visits, support staff & meals.

## 3 DAY MISSION

**TUESDAY JANUARY 23-  
THURSDAY JANUARY 25**

FOR MORE INFO & REGISTRATION:

**[WWW.YINBH.ORG/ISRAELMISSION](http://WWW.YINBH.ORG/ISRAELMISSION)**

## OUR DONATIONS TO ISRAEL

### A MESSAGE FROM RABBI DUNNER

Since October 7th, our community, along with many friends of our community, have been incredibly generous. We have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for Israel at its time of greatest need, and we have also sent dozens of suitcases and hundreds of boxes of supplies for families displaced by the devastating Simchat Torah massacre, and by the threat of rockets on both the southern and northern borders. One particular fundraiser, which took place at my tenth anniversary celebration dinner, raised over \$400,000 – and this money has been set aside to fund the needs of those whose homes were destroyed by terrorists, both in terms of rebuilding their homes, and for mental health rehabilitation. Many of them lost family members, as well as livelihoods, and it will be a long journey for them to get back on their feet. We are working very closely with two partner organizations in Israel: Lemaan Achai, a grassroots social welfare charity dealing directly with families in need, and Herzog Hospital, which has launched a special mental-health program in partnership with the Israeli government, to address the mental health crisis precipitated by October 7th. During our upcoming solidarity mission to Israel, we will be visiting both Lemaan Achai in Beit Shemesh, and Herzog Hospital in Jerusalem. We will be disbursing the funds raised, and donors on the trip will have an opportunity to personally meet with the recipients of our donations. Our intention is to build and sustain a relationship with these recipients, whose lives we hope to positively impact on an ongoing basis in the months and years ahead. After our trip, the shul will send a letter with details of how much money was raised, and how this money has been used to assist those who have received it. Every dollar will be accounted for, and there are no administration fees – all the money received is going to those who need it. Once again, thank you so much for your generosity. It makes me proud to be your rabbi.

KIDS CLUB  
ישיבת YINBH  
BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE  
PRESENTS

# SATURDAY

# NIGHT

# LIVE

# 13

JANUARY



*A Magical Evening of Mitzvot!*

**Create special gifts and letters for soldiers & children of  
displaced families in Israel.**

**6:30 PM**

**WHICH WILL BE DELIVERED  
JUST A FEW DAYS LATER!!**

**DELICIOUS FOOD • SPECIAL ENTERTAINMENT • MUSICAL HAVDALAH • TODDLER CORNER & MORE!**

**RSVP + INFO: [WWW.YINBH.ORG/SNL](http://WWW.YINBH.ORG/SNL)**