

# Tefilla Notebook

5 Tammuz • Korach

June 23-24, 2023

Steven Dorfman, President

Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi

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Dear Members and Friends,

In his iconic masterpiece, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde made a profound observation that continues to resound with enduring relevance: "Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing." Wilde's shrewd use of the seemingly limiting word "nowadays" actually transcends temporal boundaries, vastly expanding the scope of his statement. He was being ironic – in reality suggesting that this human weakness holds true regardless of the era or location. As the French saying goes, "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose." Human nature is oblivious to the constraints of time and place, and the fundamental flaws of the human condition that misdirected our ancient ancestors continue to challenge and confront us down to the present day.

Broadly speaking, who we are and how we behave is the result of our animal instincts, and not – as we'd like to imagine – the result of our elevated souls and human superiority. Which brings me to the extraordinary story of the Universe 25 experiment, conducted by ethologist John B. Calhoun (1917-1995) between 1968 and 1972, the details of which were featured in a recent article in *The Scientist*.

Universe 25 was a groundbreaking study that originally aimed to investigate the effects of overpopulation on social behavior in a controlled environment – but which ultimately became a study charting societal collapse. The experiment involved creating a self-contained world, referred to as Universe 25, designed to provide all necessary resources and protections in abundance – including food, water, shelter, and no predators – for a community of mice. The experiment began with four mice "couples", and during the initial stages the mouse population flourished, with individuals forming social groups and exhibiting normal behaviors. But as the population grew, the social dynamics began to deteriorate. The mice became increasingly aggressive and territorial, displaying a range of abnormal behaviors – such as excessive grooming and self-isolation.

As the experiment progressed, and despite there being room for more mice in the enclosure, a phenomenon emerged that Calhoun called "behavioral sink" – essentially, a state of social collapse characterized by the breakdown of social bonds, loss of reproductive capability, and ultimately, total extinction. By Day 315, lower-ranking males faced rejection from females and disengaged from mating altogether. Estranged from the larger groups, these outcast males resorted to purely solitary activities. In contrast, the alpha males displayed heightened aggression and combative behavior, often initiating violence without clear provocation or motive. Disturbingly, these dominant males engaged in indiscriminate acts of rape against other mice, regardless of gender. On several occasions, violent conflicts escalated into brutal battles, culminating in cannibalistic acts by the victors.

And as the male mice deviated from their traditional roles, females were left to take care of their nests on their own. This led to a significant shift in behavior, with many females displaying increased aggression, even towards their own offspring. Some females completely neglected their maternal duties, abandoning unraised litters and withdrawing from further mating. These behavioral changes resulted in severe consequences – among some clusters, the infant mortality rate reached alarming levels, exceeding 90 percent. Unsurprisingly, the mouse population peaked about two years after the experiment began – even though they had not yet outgrown the enclosure. After that the colony stagnated, and then declined precipitously, with the last mouse dying in 1972.

To Calhoun, the message was quasi-religious, and certainly not limited to mice. As he put it in his comprehensive 1973 article: "I shall largely speak of mice, but my thoughts are on man, on healing, on life and its evolution. Threatening life and evolution are the two deaths – death of the spirit and death of the body." Although the mouse enclosure was originally

conceived as a "Mortality-Inhibiting Environment for Mice" – it was unofficially referred to as "mouse heaven." But before long it had turned into a death trap, more appropriately referred to as "mouse hell." Despite having no problems with hunger, thirst, predators, mousetraps, cold winters, or company – the natural animal instincts that ordinarily protect animals from extinction turned the tables on these privileged mice, dooming them to a tragic demise. Once their spirit had died, their physical death was a foregone conclusion.

The bottom line is simple. Having everything without having meaning in your life breeds discontent, as exemplified in recent history by the eventual collapse of communism. Communism's utopian promise of equality, when put into practice as it was in the Soviet Union and countries of the Eastern Bloc, resulted in an oppressive Universe 25 environment, bereft of personal freedom and initiative. Although communism provided the basic needs of its people, it suppressed their individual ambitions and aspirations, except in the field of gaining power and perpetrating violence, a situation scarily analogous to the "mouse heaven" of Universe 25. Both these examples demonstrate a universal predicament: an excess of provision and a lack of challenges, in an environment devoid of any kind of spiritual objectives, will unavoidably lead to stagnation and decline.

This is not a novel insight. The "nowadays" of today has its parallels in the "nowadays" of the past, most notably, perhaps, in the biblical story of Moses' cousin Korach. Korach is a Universe 25 poster child: wealthy, entitled, and living in a divinely blessed environment – in which he could enjoy abundant manna from heaven, endless supplies of water from Miriam's well, and protection from any danger inside the cocoon of God's clouds of glory. But despite these blessings, Korach's spirit began to wane, and his alpha-male personality took over. Driven by an overblown sense of privilege and an insatiable hunger for power, he staged a needless rebellion against Moses, who was the very epitome of humility and selfless leadership.

Just like the mice of Universe 25, Korach and his co-conspirators spiraled into a behavioral sink, their spirit corroded under the weight of material plenty and pointless ambition. Korach's subsequent death serves as a stark reminder from the dawn of Jewish history of the dangers of a plentiful life lived in the absence of spiritual aspiration. In contrast, Moses' leadership reflected a deep understanding of maintaining the balance between prosperity and the service of God. Moses not only cared for his people – he also realized that temporal power and the satisfaction of physical needs only gain significance when they are coupled with spiritual aspirations and devotion to a higher purpose. Only then can a society endure; otherwise, it is fated for oblivion.

In our contemporary Western society, which is marked by abundant material wealth and an alarming decline in spiritual pursuits, the cautionary tales of Universe 25, communism, and Korach hold significant relevance. Prosperity and abundance, devoid of meaningful purpose and spiritual underpinnings, too often lead to societal stagnation and eventually, a precipitous decline. Meanwhile, a harmonious balance of physical prosperity and spiritual aspiration paves the way for a robust and sustainable civilization.

Even after the passage of three millennia, the Jewish people continue to embody and disseminate this critical message. The Jews serve as a living testament to the power of blending material success with spiritual purpose. Perhaps we should thank Korach – after all, his failure provided a lasting lesson, one that came early in our history, but which continues to echo down the corridors of time, reminding us of the importance of marrying worldly accomplishments with transcendent goals. To do otherwise would be the beginning of the end.

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom, and a great week ahead,  
Rabbi Pini Dunner

## FRIDAY, JUNE 23

7:50pm CANDLELIGHTING  
6:30pm KABBALAT SHABBAT

## SATURDAY, JUNE 24

8:30 am GEMARA SHIUR  
9:15 am SHACHARIT  
7:35 pm PIRKEI AVOT SHIUR  
8:00 pm MINCHA  
8:50 pm MAARIV  
8:53 pm SHABBAT ENDS

## WEEKDAY DAVENING

Sun	8:00am	8:00pm
Mon-Thu	7:00am	8:00pm
Fri	7:00am	6:30pm

## MAZEL TOV

To all our graduates  
and  
Thank You to our kiddush  
sponsors - full list on page 2.

# Let's Talk Sisterhood

with Gina Raphael & Maryjo Schnitzer

Congratulations to our  
2023 Graduates!

We're so proud of you!

**COMING SOON**

An evening of challah braiding with  
inspiration for the  
New Year 5784.

Details to follow!

Watch Out for the upcoming book launch of  
Hearts and Mind II in September.

## Thank you to our Graduation Shabbat Kiddush Sponsors

Ed & Cecile Gromis      Mark & Marlene Perl

Mehdi & Khorshid      Hillel & Ruthie  
Eshaghian      Kellerman

Jeff Gross & Gina      David & Leah Ross  
Raphael

Aaron & Annabel      Sadeghi  
Greenwald      Joe & Galina Samuel

Mark & Janey      David & Allison  
Herskovitz      Sostchen.

Barry Novack & Annie Baum

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Laurette Ben-Nathan

Daniel Teboul

Meir Dunner

Vladimir Lastenko

Noah Kest

Michele Silver

Irina Schaeffer

Sienna Lev Teboul

Rachel Kessler

## Happy Anniversary

Igor & Lisa Korbato

Adam & Jesse Shaked

Alan & Judi Fogelman

Moshe & Helen Sassover

## Yahrtzeits

**Joan Ben-Nathan**

Hannah bat Rudolph a"h

Mother of

**Laurette Ben-Nathan**

Yahrtzeit - 6 Tammuz

**Karen Banker**

Chaya Mindel bat Gershon a"h

Sister of

**Janice Kaufler**

Yahrtzeit - 6 Tammuz

**Rose Garshofsky**

Bayla Raiza bat Moshe Eliezer

HaKohen a"h

Mother of

**Larry Garshofsky**

Yahrtzeit - 6 Tammuz

**Lawrence Gittler**

Lavi ben Yosef z"l

Father of

**Greg Gittler**

Yahrtzeit - 7 Tammuz

**Klary Fischmann**

Rivka bat Chaim Yehuda a"h

Sister of

**George Fischmann**

Yahrtzeit - 8 Tammuz

**Sol Kest**

Shlomo Baruch ben Yitzchak

Elimelech z"l

Father of

**Ezra Kest**

Yahrtzeit - 9 Tammuz

**Sam Weiss**

Mordechai Shimon ben Yitzchak

Yehudah z"l

Father of

**Vivian Dorfman**

Yahrtzeit - 9 Tammuz

**Ester Feldberg**

Ester Devorah bat Yitzchak Meyer

Wasserman a"h

Mother of

**Marty Feldberg**

Yahrtzeit - 10 Tammuz

**Rabbi Levi Meier**

Levi ben Asher HaLevi z"l

Father of

**Isaac Meier**

Yahrtzeit - 10 Tammuz

*Mazel Tov*

**Annabel & Aaron  
Greenwald**

on the hebrew naming  
of their daughter of  
Gemma Skye this  
shabbos

## THANK YOU

**Isaac and Sarah Meier**

for sponsoring the  
flowers in the shul in  
memory of Isaac's  
father, **Rabbi Levi  
Meier, Levi ben Asher  
HaLevi z"l**, whose  
yahrtzeit is on the 10th  
of Tammuz.

*Mazel  
Tov*



**Shawney and**

**Richard Fine** on the birth  
their 5th great-grandchild  
**Raphael Yekusiel**. born to  
**Shmuel Yosef and  
Naomi Fine**

*Mazel Tov*

**Emmanuelle & Joshua**

**Neufeld** on the birth of a  
baby girl, **Romy Ruth Malka**.  
Mazal Tov to grandparents,  
**Ginette & Patrick Hodara**,  
**Aimee Neufeld and Brad  
Neufeld**. Mazal Tov to big  
sister **Margot**.

*Thank You*

**Aaron & Lillian Fuchs  
and Jason Fuchs** for

sponsoring next week's  
Parsha shiur in memory of  
Aaron's father and Jason's  
grandfather, **Heinrich  
Fuchs, Chaim Shaul ben  
Yitzchak z"l**, whose  
yahrtzeit is on the 12th of  
Tammuz.



# CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES

*"To defend a country, you need an army. But to defend an identity, you need a school. Judaism is the religion of the book, not the sword."*

*Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks z"l*



## BENJAMIN GRABEL

Benjamin graduated from Pre-1A at Gindi Maimonides Academy. He will be attending first grade next year. He is the son of Becky and Reuben Grabel and the grandson of Cecile and Ed Gromis.



## MIA GROSS

Mia graduated from 8th Grade at Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy and will attend Shalhevet High School. She is the daughter of Jeff Gross & Gina Raphael.



## JONATHAN (YONI) HERSKOVITZ, Ph.D.

Jonathan graduated from Medical School at University of Nebraska Medical Center. He and his wife Liorah have decided to stay in Omaha where Yoni will be completing his residency program in internal medicine at University of Nebraska. He is the son of Mark & Janey Herskovitz.



## ELISABETH HODARA, MD

Elisabeth graduated from Pediatric Residency in Philadelphia and will begin her fellowship in Allergy & Immunology at Montefiore Medical Center, New York, this coming July. She is the daughter of Drs. Patrick & Ginette Hodara.



## REECE LEVIN

Reece graduated from Staunton High School in Virginia, Cum Laude. He is the grandson of Dr. William Levin.



## DANIELLE NOVACK

Danielle graduated from Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, and received a Doctor of Medicine degree, with Distinction in Community Service-Global Health & Research. She is the daughter of Barry Novack & Annie Baum



### ANDREW PERL

Andrew graduated from 8th grade at Harkham Gaon Academy, where he will also be attending high school. He is the son of Mark & Marelne Perl.



### BOBBY PERL

Bobby Perl graduated from 8th grade at Harkham Gaon Academy, where he will also be attending high school. He is the son of Mark & Marelne Perl.



### LILA PERL

Lila Perl graduated high school, having attended YULA/Hamilton. She will be attending UC San Diego in the fall. She is the daughter of Mark & Marlene Perl.



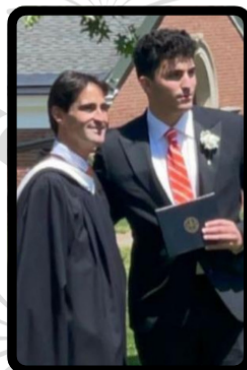
### RENA PERL

Rena Perl made aliyah after high school and is receiving her degree in education and teaching credentials from Michlala Jerusalem. She is currently working as an English teacher at the Tzviya Yetziratit school in Jerusalem, and has accepted their offer for full-time employment in the fall. She is the daughter of Mark & Marlene Perl.



### ALEXANDRA PRERO

Alexandra graduated from 8th grade at Yavneh Hebrew Academy and will be attending YULA next year. She is the daughter of Dovi and Naomi Prero and Granddaughter of Hillel and Ruthie Kellerman.



### JOSH RUIMY

Josh graduated from high school at Suffield Academy in CT and will head to NYC to start college at NYU this fall. Josh is the son of Franck & Evelina Ruimy.



### ADIELA SADEGHI

Adiel completed 12th grade and will go on to college. She is the daughter of Faramarz & Sheilagh Sadeghi.



### ADINA SADEGHI

Adina completed 12th grade and will go on to college. She is the daughter of Faramarz & Sheilagh Sadeghi.





## NETANEL SADEGHI

Netanel graduated with a Bachelors in Computer Science and Business from USC. He is the son of Faramarz & Sheilagh Sadeghi.



## URIEL SADEGHI

Uriel graduated from LMU School of Accounting. He is the son of Faramarz & Sheilagh Sadeghi.



## BENJAMIN SAMUEL

Benjamin graduated from elementary School and will be starting middle school at Wilshire Blvd Temple for 7th grade. He is the grandson of Joe & Galina Samuel.



## ELEANOR SAMUEL

Eleanor graduated from 8th grade at Crossroads School in West LA. She is going to Del Tolido in the valley. She is the granddaughter of Joe & Galina Samuel.



## JADEN SILVER

Jaden graduated from Shalhevet High School and will be attending the Samueli School of Engineering at UCLA in the fall. Jaden is the son of Michele and David Silver



## SEAN SILVER

Sean graduated from Shalhevet High School and will be attending the Samueli School of Engineering at UCLA in the fall. Sean is the son of Michele and David Silver.



## MICHAEL SILVER

Michael received his Masters of Science Degree in Integrated Design, Business and Technology from USC Irvine and Young Academy. Michael is the son of Michele and David Silver.



## JONATHAN SOROUDI

Jonathan graduated from Shalhevet High School. He will be attending USC on a Presidential Merit Scholarship. Jonathan is the son of Behrouz and Nora Soroudi.



### JACOB SOSTCHEN

Jacob graduated from 12th grade at YULA. He will be attending UC Davis studying Biological Sciences in the fall. He is the son of David & Allison Sostchen



### MICAH SOSTCHEN

Micah graduated from 8th grade at Maimonides and will be attending YULA in the fall. He is the son of David & Allison Sostchen.



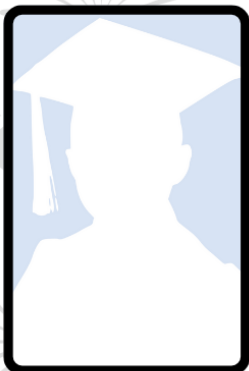
### SIENNA TEBOUL

Sienna graduated from 8th grade at Pressman Academy and will be starting High School at Milken next year. She is the daughter of Daniel & Natalie Teboul.



### ARIANA SHAINA WILNER

Ariana graduated with dual Degrees: JD in Law as well as MS in Bioengineering, both from UCLA. She is the granddaughter of Mehdi and Korsid Eshaghian



### MIRIAM CASDEN

Miriam graduated from 8th grade at Beverly Vista Middle School. She is going to Beverly Hills High School next year. She is the daughter of Arik Casden and Marita Richardson.



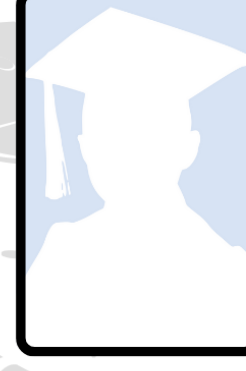
### ARIEL FINE

Ariel graduated from Wisconsin Institute of Torah Studies. He is the grandson of Dr. Richard & Shawney Fine.



### SHMUEL YOSEF FINE

Shmuel Yosef graduated from Landers college with a bachelors in business. He is the grandson of Dr. Richard & Shawney Fine.



### DARSIE ROSS

Darsie graduated from 8th grade at Hillel Hebrew Academy and will be attending Shalhevet High School in the fall. He is the son of David & Leah Ross.



# TISHA B'AV FILM SCREENING

99% of those who carried out the murders  
in the Holocaust were never prosecuted.....  
They were never even questioned. Why?

## GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER(S)



The  
Guardian

**No17 of the 50 Best Films of 2021 in the UK**  
THE HIGHEST RATED DOCUMENTARY ON THE LIST

**WEDNESDAY,  
JULY 26TH**

**6:00pm** Mincha

**7:59pm** Fast Begins

**8:10pm** Mincha/Maariv,  
followed by Megillat  
Eicha

**THURSDAY,  
JULY 27TH**

**8:00am** Shacharit/Kinnot  
*Tallis and Tefillin are not  
worn*

**12:59pm** Chatzot

**4:45pm** Film Screening:  
Getting Away with  
Murder(s)

**7:45pm** Mincha/Maariv  
with tefillin & leining

**8:33pm** Fast Ends

RSVP at

**BEVERLYHILLSSYNAGOGUE.ORG/TISHABAV**



# Yinbh Mikvah



## HOURS

The Mikvah is open every evening including Shabbat, Yom Tov and Motzei Shabbat.

Kallah appointments also available.

All appointments must be made in advance.

## TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

[www.yinbh.org/mikvah](http://www.yinbh.org/mikvah) or Download the MikvahCloud app



## OUR LOCATION

9261 Alden Drive  
Beverly Hills

## CONTACT US

310-299-1792 (Text Only)  
[www.yinbh.org/mikvah](http://www.yinbh.org/mikvah)