

Tefilla Notebook

16 Elul • Ki Tavo

September 1-2, 2023

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Dear Members and Friends,

This week marked the 96th anniversary of the untimely death of Rabbi Yisrael Abba Citron, who died in 1927 at the tender age of 46. At the time of his passing, Rabbi Citron was the rabbi of Petah Tikva, where he had lived since 1911. During his tenure as Petah Tikva's rabbi, Rabbi Citron not only acted as a spiritual guide to the local community, but also as a civic leader, social worker, and

powerhouse advocate for Religious Zionism.

Born in Dvinsk into a very devout family, Rabbi Citron was a descendant of the celebrated eighteenth-century chief rabbi of Hamburg, Rabbi Raphael Susskind Cohen (1722-1803). In his formative years, Rabbi Citron studied at the yeshivas of Telz and Volozhin. He later returned to the city of his birth and studied with the two local rabbis, both of whom were world-class scholars: Rabbi Meir Simcha Hachohen, author of the seminal work *Ohr Some'ah* on Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*; and Rabbi Yosef Rozin, known to all as "The Rogachover Genius." While in Dvinsk, Rabbi Citron married the Rogachover's daughter, Rachel, and also acquired a formal education, receiving a governmental diploma, and learning to speak, read and write Russian, French, English, and German.

Although Rabbi Citron received countless invitations to become the rabbi of various well-established European communities, in the summer of 1911 he decided to accept the rabbinic position he'd been offered in Petah Tikva – at that time a tiny Jewish farming settlement not even recognized by the Ottoman authorities as its own municipal jurisdiction. When his family and friends queried his decision to abandon the promise of a solid career in Europe, Rabbi Citron dismissed them, saying: "It's preferable to be the rabbi in a small village in the Land of Israel than in a big city abroad."

Rabbi Citron's closest confidant and colleague in Eretz Yisrael was Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hachohen Kook, first as rabbi of Jaffa, then as Palestine's chief rabbi. They worked closely together on various projects to invigorate religious life among Jewish immigrants, and they also collaborated in founding the chief rabbinate and a higher rabbinical court for Palestine, against an avalanche of opposition by rabbinic colleagues and ideological adversaries. Curiously, Rabbi Citron does not seem to have been in close communication with his father-in-law, and there is no record of correspondence between them in the Rogachover's published works. It is widely suspected that this poor relationship was due to their divergent views on Jewish resettlement in the Land of Israel; the Rogachover fiercely opposed Zionism, including its religious exponents.

But there was one remarkable exception, relayed many years later by the Religious Zionist activist and Jerusalem's first mayor Shlomo Zalman Shragai (1899-1995), in a letter to Rishon LeZion's chief rabbi, Rabbi Chaim Zevelun Charlap (1902-1966). Three years after moving to Petah Tikva, in 1914, Rabbi Citron was suddenly faced with a significant challenge. The Ottoman authorities informed him of their intentions to deport him, as he was not a Turkish citizen. His only recourse was to take an oath that he was born in Palestine – which wasn't true, as he had been born in Dvinsk. Lying under oath was not something Rabbi Citron could do, but the thought of abandoning his community and the Land of Israel was too much for him to bear, and he sought guidance from his renowned father-in-law.

True to his idiosyncratic style, the Rogachover sent his son-in-law a terse response: a cryptic Talmudic reference to Ketubot 75a. The Gemara there interprets a verse from Psalms (87:5) — **וְלִצְיוֹן נֶאֱמַר אִישׁ וְאִישׁ יָלֵד בָּהּ** — "And of Zion it shall be said, 'This man and that man were born there'" — to mean that whether one was literally born in Zion or ardently yearns for Zion, one is considered to have been born there. On that basis, the Rogachover was saying, Rabbi Citron could swear that he was born in the

Land of Israel, and his oath would not be false. Heartfelt longing for Israel and a belief that Zion is your country meant that even if you were born elsewhere, you could proclaim "I was born in Zion" with as much confidence as any native-born resident.

Commenting on the opening verses of Ki Tavo that discuss bringing Bikkurim – the tithe of the first fruits – to the Temple, Sifrei says "Do this mitzva, for in its merit you will enter the land." But this statement presents a problem. According to the Talmud, the commandment of Bikkurim could only be fulfilled after the land had been both conquered and distributed among the tribes – and this only happened 14 years after the Israelites entered the land. In which case, how can the mitzvah of Bikkurim serve as the merit through which we earn the privilege to enter the Promised Land, when the commandment itself can only be observed after we've already settled there?

The answer is hinted at in the verses themselves. Moses began his address to the nation about Bikkurim by telling them: -

וְהָיָה כִּי תָבוֹא אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ נֹתֵן לְךָ נַחֲלָה וּיְרַשְׁתָּהּ וְנִשְׁבַּחְתָּ

"When you enter the land that Hashem your God is giving you as a heritage – and you possess it and settle in it." Clearly, for the tithe of first fruits to have any meaning or significance, the Jewish nation would first have to internalize the idea that the land is their heritage, their inheritance, and their birthright – namely, at the very center of their national identity. Only then would they be able to possess it and settle in it.

The essence of Eretz Yisrael transcends mere geographical borders, or increasing the population, or building cities and expanding commerce. Even the establishment of autonomous Jewish rule is not enough. You could vanquish the Canaanites and populate the entire territory, and still not appreciate that the land is your heritage. The true identity of Eretz Yisrael lies in its role as the spiritual epicenter and sanctuary of Jewish existence, and that is something that can only ever exist in the heart of a Jew.

Rabbi Citron's successor as rabbi of Petah Tikva was Rabbi Reuven Katz (1880-1963), a distinguished rabbinic scholar and respected community rabbi who abandoned his well-paid job in Bayonne, New Jersey, to take up the position in Palestine. According to Rabbi Katz, what distinguishes the fruit of Eretz Yisrael from fruit that is grown anywhere else in the world is the profound spiritual connection a farmer feels to his produce. That is why the farmer will willingly offer his cherished first fruits to the priest – an act of sacrifice symbolizing an acknowledgment that the gifts of the land, and indeed every other blessing, are not solely the fruit of human endeavor, but they are graciously bestowed upon us by God.

In reflecting on the journey and legacy of Rabbi Yisrael Abba Citron, it is unmistakably clear that the true essence of Eretz Yisrael is embedded not in the soil or borders of the country, but within the soul and heart of every Jew. Rabbi Citron, like the farmers offering their first fruits, embodied the profound understanding that our connection to the land is not just about our physical presence, but also about recognizing it as the divine gift it truly is. Rabbi Citron's passionate commitment, even in the face of adversity, serves as a timeless testament to this bond. Whether born on the soil of Zion, or whether drawn to it by the strings of one's heart, Eretz Yisrael remains the unshakable pillar, the center of Jewish identity, and the eternal homeland for the Jewish soul. Rabbi Citron's story reminds us all that to truly call Israel ours, it is not enough to live in it – we must allow it to live within us.

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



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

7:01pm CANDLELIGHTING
6:30pm KABBALAT SHABBAT

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

8:30 am GEMARA SHIUR
9:15 am SHACHARIT
6:40 pm PIRKEI AVOT SHIUR
7:05 pm MINCHA
7:55 pm MAARIV
7:57 pm SHABBAT ENDS

WEEKDAY DAVENING

Sun & Mon 8:00am 7:05pm
Tue - Thurs 7:00am 7:05pm
Fri 7:00am 6:30pm

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Elki Adamker
AND
Jonathan & Jessica Akhavan

Let's Talk Sisterhood

with Gina Raphael & Maryjo Schnitzer

Join us for the book launch of Hearts & Minds II on September 7th with special guest Ruth Wasserman Lande, former MK and News Correspondent.

We are so grateful to **WIZO**, The Women's International Zionist Organization, for partnering with us.

Register at yinbh.org/booklaunch

Yahrtzeits



Goldie Cohen

Goldah bat Zurich
v'Esther a"h
Mother of

Jean Friedman

Yahrtzeit - 17 Elul

Benjamin Ross

Benyamin ben Meir z"l
Father of
David Ross

Yahrtzeit - 19 Elul

Louis Magenheimer

Asher ben Dov Ber z"l
Father of

Maggie Bayer

Yahrtzeit - 22 Elul

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

MARK HERSKOVITZ

JADEN SILVER

SEAN SILVER

DANA SZAFRANSKI

EVA LARI

FRAN MILLER

ALEX MASKET

LIZBETH BERMAN

EVA HOGAN

Happy Anniversary

Natalie & Daniel
Teboul

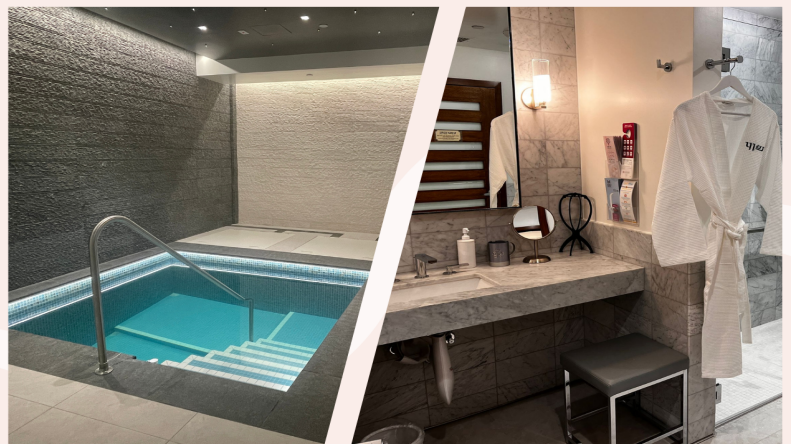
Reminder to take
your personal items
from the coat closet
by September 8th



We have two gorgeous displays of marble yahrtzeit plaques on the back walls of our sanctuary. This is a beautiful way of memorializing the names of departed loved ones. Yahrtzeit plaques cost \$1,800.

To order a plaque or for more information contact Madeline Kramer at mkramer@yinbh.org

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 or Download the MikvahCloud app



OUR LOCATION

9261 Alden Drive
Beverly Hills

CONTACT US

310-299-1792 (Text Only)
www.yinbh.org/mikvah

Join us for a kiddush luncheon

WELCOMING



The Perlstein Family

to YINBH Beverly Hills Synagogue
Shabbat Day - September 9th
services begin at 9:15am
kiddush luncheon following services

THANK YOU

to the entire YINBH Board of directors for sponsoring the luncheon

Jonathan & Julie Boyer
Steven & Vivian Dorfman
Judith & Larry Garshofsky
Ruthie & Hillel Kellerman
Annie Baum & Barry Novack

David & Gloria Frankel
Cecile & Ed Gromis
Hillel Laks
Michael & Ariella Novack
Stephen & Jessica Samuel

George & Irina Schaeffer
Jeff Gross & Gina Raphael
Bill & Joan Lopatin
Lee Samson
Moshe & Helen Sassover

COMING TO YINBH ON SEPTEMBER 9TH
SATURDAY NIGHT FERVOR
MUSICAL KUMZITS AND SELICHOT



YINBH presents
SATURDAY NIGHT FERVOR
MOTZEI SHABBAT KUMZITS AND SELICHOT
starring **RABBI PINI DUNNER**, with **RABBI ARYEH PERLSTEIN**.
Featuring **YOU!**
Produced by **THE STAFF OF YINBH**.
Join us for an inspiring kumzits at 9:30pm followed by a
soulful musical Selichot service.

BOOK
Launch

with
Rabbi Pini Dunner



**Thursday
7 September 2023**

6:30pm - Cheese & Wine Reception

7:30pm - Book Launch Q&A:
Rabbi Dunner with Ruth Wasserman Lande

Special Guest

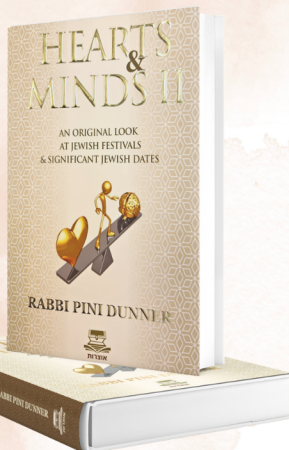
**Ruth Wasserman
Lande**

Former MK & i24 news commentator

\$54 per person including a signed
copy of Rabbi Dunner's New Book

Register at

www.yinbh.org/booklaunch



This event is being graciously sponsored by
Bob Zeller & Nadine Gerson

Membership Renewal 5784

All current members are invited to renew their membership for the upcoming year 5784. Please visit yinbh.org/renewal. You can also call the office at 310-276-7650 or email office@yinbh.org.

Once you renew your membership, you can...



Reserve your **High Holiday Seats** at yinbh.org/seats.
Please Reserve by September 8th.



Order your **Arba Minim** directly from the shul.
Please order by September 21st. Order online at
yinbh.org/arbaminim



Place names in the **Yizkor Booklet**. Please submit
by September 11th. Sign up at yinbh.org/yizkor






Sign up your children or grandchildren for
Kids Club during High Holiday Services. Sign
up at yinbh.org/kidsclub.

**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS ALREADY
RENEWED THEIR MEMBERSHIP FOR 5784**

Toddlers

Preschoolers

School-Aged

9 AM	Soft Play		Free Play/Game Room
10:00 AM	High Holiday Circle Time With Rebbetzin Mushky		"Mini-Yan" With Rabbi Aryeh
10:30 AM	Build-a-Shofar 	Races & Games with Amazing Kids Co.	 Master Cesar Karate
11:30 AM	Lil' Tikes with Amazing Kids Co.	Master Cesar Karate	Races & Games - Amazing Kids Co.

12:30 AM Raffle & Light Lunch

9 AM	Soft Play		Free Play/Game Room
9:45 AM	High Holiday Circle Time With Rebbetzin Mushky		"Mini-Yan" With Rabbi Aryeh
10:20 AM	 Shofar in Sanctuary + Snack 		
10:45 AM	 Magic & Puppet Show by Hey Hey Entertainment		High Holiday Food Competition
11:30 AM	Soft Play	 Sports Coach	Minute 2 Win It - Amazing Kids Co.
12:30 AM	Raffle & Light Lunch		

9 AM	Soft Play		Free Play/Game Room
10:00 AM	High Holiday Circle Time With Rebbetzin Mushky		"Mini-Yan" With Rabbi Aryeh
10:45 AM	 Bubblemania Show & Play		 SportBall
11:45 AM	 Lunch		
12:00 PM	Soft Play	Sportball Coach	 Master Cesar Karate
1:00 PM	Master Cesar Karate	 Lego Party With Amazing Kids Co.	
4:40 PM	Soft Play		Free Play/Game Room
5:30 PM	Dinner		
6:00 PM	 Billy Bonkers Comedy Magic Show		



**ROSH
HASHANA
SEP. 16**



**ROSH
HASHANA
SEP. 17**



**YOM
KIPPUR
SEP. 24-25**