

Tefilla Notebook

23 Elul • Nitzavim-Vayelech

September 8-9, 2023

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Dear Members and Friends,

In an era where the fight for women's rights often intersects with religious freedoms, this week's groundbreaking decision from a New Jersey Appellate Court has ignited fevered discussion within the global Jewish community and beyond. The case centered around an Orthodox Jewish woman,

previously restrained by law from voicing her anguish over her estranged husband's refusal to grant her a get, the religious writ for a Jewish divorce.

The Appellate Court ruling categorically reversed an earlier restraining order issued by a lower court, initiated from a complaint by the husband regarding a heartfelt video the woman shared, spotlighting her torment. Crucially, the Appellate Court's verdict wasn't just about a single woman's First Amendment right to free speech; it has unveiled a broader, challenging discourse about the delicate interplay between age-old religious practices and our foundational civil rights in the modern era.

In a world where women have fought tirelessly for equal rights under the law, it is very disheartening to see faith-based laws being manipulated to abuse them. Jewish law addresses the spiritual and practical in equal measure, but human nature often gets in the way of justice, particularly if people want to use the rights and privileges provided for them by religion as a weapon to harm those they have fallen out with. Tragically, this New Jersey case is not an isolated incident, but rather it offers a glimpse into a deeply ingrained issue faced by many Jewish women: the plight of the agunot.

Rabbi Herschel Schachter, Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University in New York, is adamant that the issue of agunot is a stain on all those who uphold and cherish Judaism: "While we must ensure that halakha is observed and the sanctity of the Jewish marriage is preserved, it is imperative that we remember the human faces behind these cases. The Torah was given to bring kindness, compassion, and peace into the world."

Agunot, or "chained women", is a definition that includes those who are denied a get by their husbands, leaving them trapped in marital limbo, unable to remarry according to Jewish law. Going back centuries, the problem of agunot was more generally to do with women whose husbands had disappeared, perhaps on a sea voyage, leaving them unsure if they had been widowed or not. Rabbinic authorities stretching back two millennia made every effort to use the flimsiest of evidence to record a death, so that these women could remarry.

But in modern times such stories are rare. Nevertheless, the problem of agunot still persists. The scourge of recalcitrant husbands who use their power under the law to punish estranged wives has become an all-too-common story. In Jewish law, only the man holds the authority to provide a get and end a marriage. This power dynamic often turns the religious divorce into a weapon of abuse, where men can exert control over their spouses by withholding the divorce

document. Such manipulation is not only contrary to the spirit of Judaism – indeed, all husbands are bound by their duties as a Jewish husband to provide a get to their estranged wife – but it is also contrary to the fundamental rights of women.

In Parshat Nitzavim, the Torah bunches together all segments of the nation as a unified people of the covenant (Deut. 29:9):

אַתֶּם נִצְבִּים הַיּוֹם כָּלְכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם – "You stand this day, all of you, before your God." No one is left out: "your tribal heads, your elders, your officials – every householder in Israel, your children, your wives, even the stranger within your camp, from woodchopper to water-drawer." Literally everyone is included.

The point is: there is no hierarchy under the law, and no one gets to lord it over anyone else simply because of their status. The tribal head must look after his wife, as must the elders and officials, and they must also all take care of the needy. More importantly, as the comprehensive list shows, we are all bound up in this life together. Which means that when a woman is suffering from having been denied a get, the entire Jewish community is affected, and it is their duty to step in and ensure justice.

What is remarkable about this recent New Jersey case is that the court was emphatic: the misuse of religious laws to cause harm or pain to others is a form of abuse. The court wanted to make clear that while religious freedom is a fundamental right, and in the United States it is protected by the First Amendment – one must always be mindful of the fact that religious freedom should not come at the expense of the rights of others. Using religion as an excuse to exert control and power over another individual is not only legally wrong, but morally reprehensible.

Rabbinic authorities, scholars, and the broader Jewish community must work together to find solutions. The establishment of organizations such as the Organization for the Resolution of Agunot (ORA) – which operates under the halakhic guidance of Rabbi Schachter – is a testament to the pressing need for change. However, broader community awareness and participation are also crucial.

The New Jersey case has revealed that there's hope on the horizon. The fusion of Jewish advocacy, the fight for civil rights, and growing public support will, hopefully, pave the way for a future where religious laws uplift rather than oppress, and a life based on faith is one which is infused with joy and spirituality rather than tyranny and insensitivity.

The late Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, former President of Yeshiva University, once said about the plight of agunot: "The phenomenon of the agunah is the greatest single desecration of God's name in our generation... The very idea of an agunah goes against the grain of Jewish morality. Every possible effort must be made to release these chained women from their plight." How right he was, and we must continue to follow his lead.

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

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8		SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9	
	6:51pm CANDLELIGHTING	8:30 am GEMARA SHIUR	
	6:30pm KABBALAT SHABBAT	9:15 am SHACHARIT	
		6:30 pm PIRKEI AVOT SHIUR	
		6:55 pm MINCHA	
		7:45 pm MAARIV	
		7:47 pm SHABBAT ENDS	
		9:30pm KUMZITS	
		11:00pm SELICHOT	

WEEKDAY DAVENING		
Sun	8:00am	6:55pm
Mon - Thurs	6:40am	6:55pm
Fri	6:40am	6:30pm
Note Earlier time for Selichot Services in the morning		

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS	
Eli Tenenbaum	
Leo & Katie Pustilnikov	

Let's Talk Sisterhood

with Gina Raphael & Maryjo Schnitzer

SHOUT OUT to the women and teens, sponsors and partner organizations who joined us for our successful Challah Braiding event.

MAZAL TOV for Rabbi Dunner's newly-published book, *Hearts & Minds II - An Original Look at Jewish Festivals & Significant Jewish Dates*.

Other books by Rabbi Dunner are *Hearts & Minds - An Original Look at Each Parsha in the Torah*, and *Mavericks, Mystics & False Messiahs: Episodes from the Margins of Jewish History* (available at the shul office.)

WELCOME Rabbi Aryeh and Muskhy Perlstein and family.

JOIN us for an inspiring and soulful Selichot service this Saturday night, September 9th at 9:30.

HUGS to Carly, Madeline, Darryl and Gae, who help us work our events.

WATCH OUT for more fun and engaging Sisterhood events to come.

L'SHANAH TOVAH UMETUKAH!

Yahrtzeits



Samuel Cohen

Shalom ben Yisroel Chaim
v' Yocheved

Father of

Jean Friedman

Yahrtzeit - 26 Elul

Ted Orden

Mordechai ben Ephraim z"l
Father of

Helen Sassover

Yahrtzeit - 28 Elul

Thank you to the women and teens, sponsors and partner organizations who joined us for a successful Challah Braiding event.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

KATIE PUSTILNIKOV

MICHAEL SILVER

BARRY KRAMER

DAVID AZOUZ

ANDREW FISCHMANN

EVAN GREENSPAN

Paul Feder z"l Gemara Shiur

לע"נ פנחס אליהו בן שמשון הלוי

Join Rabbi Dunner for his Gemara Shiur on Shabbat
45 minutes before Shacharit

Mazal Tov

Payam Golan and Tziporrah Eliahoo on the birth of a son,
Nickaun Dael Eliahoo.

Mazal Tov to

Grandparents **Isaac Eliahoo & Sara Tubi** and **Yosef Sadighian & Sara Zahir.**



Oldiko Liebermann Pessl bat Yoel A"H 13th Yuhzeit

We would like to invite you to our shul
Young Israel of North Beverly Hills
On Shabbat Tshuva
September 23, 2023
Services at 9:15am
Kiddush Luncheon following services
Rivka and Raphy Nissel

RSVP at rsvp@yinbh.org

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.

BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE
YOUNG ISRAEL OF NORTH BEVERLY HILLS

**Rabbi Dunner's
Shabbat Shuva Drasha**

**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 23RD
AFTER LUNCH**

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN SHUL

**Is It Appropriate
To Have Live
Music To
Accompany
Tefillot?**



Membership Renewal 5784

**LAST CHANCE TO RESERVE YOUR HIGH
HOLIDAY SEATS**



If you have not yet submitted your request for High Holiday Seats, please do so **ASAP**. We have started assigning the seats and are near capacity. If you have any last minute High Holiday seat requests, please send it to the office ASAP. Rosh Hashanah - Sept 15-17 Yom Kippur - Sept 24-25 Please contact the office to renew/join and submit your request for seats.

Email: office@yinbh.org Call: 310-276-7650



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 13th. (Deadline extended) 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 PM 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 PM 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
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11:45 AM  Lunch

12:00 PM	Soft Play	Sportball Coach	 Master Cesar Karate
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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