

Tefilla Notebook

This week's Tefilla Notebook is sponsored by
Dr. Susan Graysen in memory of her mother, **Ruth Kahnowitz Davidoff, Ruth bat Moshe Yona HaKohen z"l**, whose yahrtzeit is on the 19th of Tishrei.

15-21 Tishrei • Sukkot

September 29 - October 6, 2023

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

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Dear Members and Friends,

In what has become a cherished annual tradition, each year I visit our local Arba Minim supplier to personally procure a set of Arba Minim to use each day of Sukkot. An Arba Minim set is made up of four species of plants—lulav (palm frond), hadass (myrtle), aravah (willow), and etrog (citron)—and is used in a daily

religious ritual during the festival of Sukkot, except on Shabbat. Nowadays, with modern agricultural techniques and the ease of global shipping, obtaining a set is as easy as visiting your local pop-up Arba Minim vendor, browsing through the stock, and paying the somewhat inflated but not totally outrageous price. But it wasn't always so.

During the Middle Ages and even into the modern era, as Jewish communities sprouted in Northern Europe and later on, in Eastern Europe, obtaining Arba Minim, and particularly the etrog, became a major ordeal. Shipping methods were rudimentary, and long-distance travel was fraught with dangers and hurdles. Towns with hundreds of Jewish families were often only able to obtain a handful of sets at best, and occasionally there were none.

And, unsurprisingly, prices were prohibitive. None of the four species has significant retail value, aside for during this fevered period of demand by Jewish communities across the globe. Only one of them – myrtle – is broadly used for non Arba Minim-related purposes: as a favorite of landscape gardeners, or as an ingredient for fragrant oil production and traditional medicines, and, in Corsica and Sardinia, as the base for Mirto liqueur, a popular local libation.

Historically, Arba Minim monopolies often became a source of grinding community friction. In the late seventeenth century, a particularly notorious battle over the right to sell etrogs in Frankfurt took a nasty turn. The Frankfurt agricultural fair was a lucrative regional center for the Arba Minim business, both wholesale and retail. One etrog dealer, Calmann Trucker from Hanau, held the exclusive right to sell etrogs in Frankfurt, but was summarily banned from selling them by local community leaders in the summer of 1684 – and they also wrote to other communities to ensure he couldn't relocate and set up shop elsewhere.

Trucker's father was also barred from selling etrogs, whereupon Trucker decided to involve the local gentile authorities. But it was to no avail, and his attempt to thwart the Frankfurt Jewish community leadership via the gentile powers-that-be ultimately failed. Whatever it was that Trucker had done to annoy the Jewish leaders put him out of business for good, and the Frankfurt Arba Minim trade was temporarily granted to a local Jew called Herz Buchsboim. Within a couple of years another etrog dealer had moved permanently to Frankfurt with his family, and that was that.

Unscrupulous practices by etrog dealers were the stuff of legends. In 1630, a certain Asher from Reichshofen—a small town in France's Rhineland—learned that no etrogs would be available locally for Sukkot. Despite searching far and wide, he was unable to find one, and consequently he prepared himself for the festival without this essential component of the Arba Minim. But just days before the

festival, a Jewish traveler arrived at the synagogue with two small etrogs for sale. Without a local rabbi and lacking time to seek expertise elsewhere, Asher turned to his own collection of rabbinic texts and deemed the etrogs kosher. He purchased them at an exorbitant price, thereby enabling the entire community to celebrate Sukkot with a complete Arba Minim set. However, after the festival, he cut open the two fruits and was dismayed to discover that they were in fact lemons, not etrogs.

Etrog growers were equally deceitful. Grafting techniques were widely used to combine lemon trees with etrog trees, resulting in smoother, cleaner fruit. Most rabbinic authorities insisted that such etrogs could not be used for Arba Minim. Nevertheless, Rabbi Moshe Isserles of Cracow ("Rema"; 1530-1572) – the venerated source of Ashkenazic custom – was hesitant to ban grafted etrogs outright, as he knew that many people used them when there was nothing else available (Shu"t ha-Rema, no. 117).

What I find most fascinating about the etrog is that unlike almost every other animal or plant mentioned in the Torah, it does not originate in the Middle East. Modern science has established that the earliest etrogs came from the Yunnan Province, a large region in Southwest China bordering Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar. The etrog then moved westward into India, where it was used as a decorative fruit, and then, with the Persian conquest of India, it eventually traveled to the Middle East and the Mediterranean, along with all citrus fruits now considered native to that area.

The first etrogs grown in Eretz Yisrael were cultivated by Persians during the period of the Babylonian Exile after the destruction of the first Jerusalem Temple. The Persian administrative center for Yehud – as Israel was known – was where Ramat Rachel is today, just south of the site of ancient Jerusalem. Alongside the administrative center was an annex that included an area they called a pairidaeza – a cultivated garden area whose name is the etymological source for the English word paradise. In 2013, a team of archaeologists from Tel Aviv University analyzed fossilized pollen from the Ramat Rachel pairidaeza and published their findings. The data showed that alongside pollen from well-established local plants, such as figs, grapes, olives, myrtle and willow, was the pollen of the etrog tree – 4,000 miles from its origins in the valleys of Yunnan.

Reflecting on this history, I find myself standing at my local Los Angeles Arba Minim vendor, meticulously examining each etrog and lulav before making my selection. The weight of generations of challenges and tales of determination in securing these religious artifacts is palpable. As I choose my set, I'm overwhelmed with gratitude for the ease with which we can now acquire these unique and sacred plant species. Sukkot, heralded by the Talmud as z'man simhateinu – "a time of our joy," is made all the more joyous by recognizing our modern-day fortune. In an era where procuring Arba Minim is so simple, we should all be reminded to cherish the comforts we enjoy and remember the tenacity of our ancestors.

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom and a Chag Sameach,
Rabbi Pini Dunner

FRIDAY, SEPT 29 - EREV SUKKOT

7:00AM SHACHARIT
6:22PM CANDLELIGHTING
6:25 PM MINCHA/KABBALAT YOMTOV

SATURDAY, SEPT 30 - FIRST DAY

8:15 AM GEMARA SHIUR
9:00 AM SHACHARIT
6:20 PM MINCHA
6:40 PM MAARIV
7:17 PM CANDLELIGHTING

SUNDAY, OCT 1 - SECOND DAY

8:15 AM GEMARA SHIUR
9:00 AM SHACHARIT
6:20 PM MINCHA
6:30 PM SHIUR
7:10 PM MAARIV
7:14 PM YOM TOV ENDS

CHOL HAMOED SUKKOT

MON 2ND, TUES 3RD,
WED 4TH, THU 5TH
7:00AM SHACHARIT
6:20PM MINCHA/MAARIV

FRIDAY, OCT 6TH HOSHANAH RABBA

7:00 AM SHACHARIT*
*Hoshanas available for sale at shul
11:00 AM VIRTUAL YIZKOR
6:13 PM CANDLE LIGHTING
6:15 PM KABBALAT YOM TOV
*DON'T FORGET TO LIGHT
YIZKOR CANDLE*

Please note on Shemini Atzeret Oct 7th there will be no Gemara Shiur and services will begin at 8:30am

Let's Talk Sisterhood

with Gina Raphael & Maryjo Schnitzer

We look forward to our upcoming season of lectures, The Real Housewives of the Torah. Details on the flyer.

We appreciate your continued support and wish everyone Chag Sameach!

LIVE VIRTUAL YIZKOR SERVICE

יזכור



Friday October 6th,
11:00am PST via zoom

Zoom Code: 310 276 7650
Password: yinbh

Yahrtzeits

David Elhiani

David ben Avraham z"l

Brother of

Simon Elhiani

Yahrtzeit - 17 Tishrei

Agnes Holtz

Chaya Toibe Roize bat Avraham
Eliyahu v'Reche a"h

Mother of

Nora Holtz

Yahrtzeit - 17 Tishrei

Helene Bayer

Hadassah bat Shimshon a"h

Mother of

Maggie Bayer

Yahrtzeit - 18 Tishrei

Ruth Kahnowitz Davidoff

Ruth bat Moshe Yona
HaKohen z"l

Mother of

Susan Graysen

Yahrtzeit - 19 Tishrei

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

HANNAH FOGELMAN

CARLY EINFELD

SAMMY SHAKED

RICHARD FINE

HARRY FINKEL

ADLEY MORISON

ROBERT

ROSENFELD

Happy Anniversary

Donald & Manya
Beier

Coming Up

The 5784 Season of

the Real Housewives OF THE TORAH

CAN'T HAVE A CHILD
AT MY AGE? LOOK
WHO'S LAUGHING NOW

TRUST ME. I KNOW
HOW TO GET AHEAD IN
LIFE.

NOVEMBER 13TH DECEMBER 11TH
SARAH JUDITH

5:30-6pm Light Dinner
6-6:45pm Lecture

\$54/event; \$72/both
YINBH.ORG/HOUSEWIVES

YINBH Beverly Hills Synagogue
9261 Alden Drive Beverly Hills, CA 90210

YINBH
SISTERHOOD



If you would like to join the Mincha/Maariv WhatsApp Group, please send a message to the Rabbi on WhatsApp at 310-499-3407



Mazel Tov to **Dalia & Jonathan Wizman** on the birth of a baby girl, **Sophia Miriam**. Mazel Tov to grandparents **Rabbi Pini & Sabine Dunner** and **David & Dalit Wizman** and big brother **Jojo Wizman**

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



FRIDAY NIGHT *Dinner*

CELEBRATING RABBI DUNNER'S
10TH ANNIVERSARY AT YINBH
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13TH • 7PM

\$125 PER PERSON

**RSVP AT
YINBH.ORG/DINNER**

9261 ALDEN DRIVE, BEVERLY HILLS 90210 • 310-276-7650 • OFFICE@YINBH.ORG



Sukkot - Taste of Jerusalem

SUNDAY OCT. 01
SHACHARIT 9 AM
KIDS CLUB 10 AM
 FOLLOWED BY LUNCH

- DECORATE THE SUKKAH
- KIDS MINI-'YAN'
- EDIBLE SUKKAH CRAFT & MYSTERY BOX CHALLENGE
- LUNCH @ THE SHUK
 - SHWARMA & FALAFEL STATIONS
 - FRESH JUICE STAND

KIDS CLUB
ייןב"ה
 BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE

SIMCHAT TORAH 2023
@BEVERLYHILLSSYNAGOGUE



DANCE DANCE DANCE

A SIMCHAT TORAH CELEBRATION!

OCTOBER 07 - 7 PM
SATURDAY NIGHT HAKAFOT

SPINNING WHEEL DANCE COMPETITION
 SIMCHAT TORAH THEMED TREATS & PRIZES
 BAR TENDER + COTTON CANDY MOCKTAILS FOR THE KIDS CLUB
 KIDDUSH - TAPAS STYLE
 KIDS CLUB DANCE TIPS WITH GALIT FRIEDLANDER
 PROFESSIONAL DANCER, CHOREOGRAPHER, COACH,
 + HOST OF DANCESPEAK

OCTOBER 8 - 10 AM
SUNDAY MORNING HAKAFOT

LIVE CHILLBACHI ICE CREAM ROLLING STATIONS
 SIMCHAT TORAH THEMED TREATS & PRIZES
 SIMCHAT TORAH FLAGS & SWAG
 KIDDUSH + BUFFET

