

Tefilla Notebook

6 Cheshvan • Noach

October 20-21, 2023

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Dear Members and Friends,

Those who regain their sight after having been blind for many years are usually overwhelmed by their renewed ability to see – but the impact of their regained sight is not always as positive as they hoped for. The GPS entrepreneur Mike May, who lost his sight at the age of three after a jar of chemicals exploded in his face, had his sight restored in 2000 via a pioneering stem cell procedure. He was 46 years old, and had been unable to see for over 40 years.

A study published three years after the operation revealed that although May could see colors, motion, and some simple two-dimensional shapes, he was incapable of more complex visual processing. Sadly, since the study was published, nothing much has changed – and, as he told researchers, he has taught himself to use his other senses to compensate for his underperforming visual abilities.

Ione Fine, a UW associate professor of psychology, was one of the authors of the study, and she has written extensively on blind people whose sight has been restored later in life. "We know very little about what happens in their brains during that period [of blindness]," she explains, "and that is going to be one of the fundamental questions going forward – what happens [to the brain] when the lights are turned off, and what happens when you turn them back on?"

I have been thinking a lot about Mike May this week. Since the October 7th massacre by Hamas terrorists in Southern Israel exploded onto the world's consciousness, it occurred to me that everyone's sight has been restored – but for most people, it seems as if their previous long-term blindness has impeded their ability to see what is in plain sight, even though their sight is restored. The lights may have been turned on, but the ability for complex visual processing has clearly not returned.

Which is why, when a Palestinian rocket intended for Israeli civilians landed on a Gaza hospital parking lot instead, the New York Times – which is fully aware that Hamas-controlled Gaza is unlikely to be reliable for information purposes – published their story under the headline: 'Israeli Strike Kills Hundreds in Hospital – At Least 500 Dead'. The headline was a lie, as was the inflated number of victims – both fed to the Times by Hamas. Other media outlets also jumped onto the 'Israeli atrocity' bandwagon, with similarly inaccurate headlines, and the story was all but confirmed.

The truth of what actually happened was revealed soon enough, with both video and audio evidence to back it up – but it was too late. The Arab world, along with countless pro-Palestinian useful idiots in the Western world, erupted with fury, resulting in the planned meeting between President Biden and Arab leaders in Jordan being canceled. And even now, notwithstanding irrefutable evidence of who the real culprits were in the dreadful slaughter of civilians at the Gaza hospital, media organizations are still reluctant to embrace the truth that is plain for all to see. Their eyes might be wide open, but their ability for complex visual processing is simply not there.

There is a remarkable passage recited by those who complete a tractate of Talmud, as part of the formal prayer of conclusion. "We give thanks to You, God, for having given us a share among those who sit in the study hall, and not among those who sit on street corners. We arise early, and they arise early – we arise for words of Torah, and they arise for words of

emptiness. We work, and they work – we work and receive a reward, and they work and do not receive a reward. We run, and they run – we run towards eternal life, and they run to a pit of desolation."

I have recited this prayer many times, but it wasn't until this week that I properly understood it. The world is full of people who, on the face of it, do exactly the same thing. We all wake up in the morning, we hear the news, we talk to people about current affairs, we work, we try to be good people and to do what is right – and then, we call it a day. But there is a clear divide. There's a 'them', and there's an 'us'. Those people who are 'them' go through the motions, as if they know what they are seeing and what they are doing. But their reality is not true reality; rather what they see is clouded by a lack of perception. They may think they are running towards eternal life, but they are actually running towards a pit of desolation.

The lie that Israel is an imperialist or colonialist project, imposed on an innocent indigenous population by postwar powers as some kind of apology to the Jews for the Holocaust, has resulted in the myth that if Palestinians agitate and terrorize Israel enough, the Jews will leave – just like the French left Algeria, and the British left India. But nothing could be further from the truth. Jews are not a foreign implant into the Land of Israel. On the contrary, those who occupied the Land of Israel while the Jews were in exile were the foreign implant. Then the Jews came back, and now they are there to stay. And to be clear: the more aggressive the attempts to get rid of Jews from Israel become, the more the Jews will show their determination to stay in the land of their heritage, dreamed of and prayed for in every corner of their diaspora for 2,000 years.

It is time for the world to realize that even with their sight renewed, it remains impaired and compromised. Mike May openly admits that his regained sight is not what it should be. So too, those who continue to treat the Jews in Israel as interlopers must accept that their vision is marred by years of blindness, which means that their view of the situation is prejudiced and wrong.

This week, in synagogues across the world, we will read the story of Noah and the Great Flood. Noah's story contains a powerful lesson about the consequences of limited vision in the face of great challenges. While Noah's righteousness saved him and his family from the flood, he presided over the utter destruction of humanity. And guess what – it was all due to his limited scope. Had Noah had full vision, he could have saved the world. It wasn't until the arrival of Abraham, a man with a broader vision and a far greater understanding of the realities around him, that the course of history began to change.

In our complex world, particularly when grappling with issues like Palestinian terrorism, we must remember that addressing these challenges often demands a vision that extends beyond a faulty, two-dimensional interpretation. Just as Abraham's vision marked a turning point in the biblical narrative, embracing a broader vision for the well-being of all will lead us towards a better future, where the limitations of vision are acknowledged as a handicap. And in a world plagued by blurred lines of perception, let us always strive to be the 'us' who, with open eyes and a broad vision, work towards a future where truth will always prevail over prejudice and lies.

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Pini Dunner

FRIDAY, OCT 20TH

5:55 PM CANDLELIGHTING
6:00 PM KABBALAT SHABBAT

SATURDAY, OCT 21ST

NO GEMARA SHIUR
9:15 AM SHACHARIT
6:00PM MINCHA
6:50 PM MAARIV
6:50 PM SHABBAT ENDS

WEEKDAY DAVENING

Sun 8:00am 6:00pm
Mon-Thu 7:00am 6:00pm
Fri 7:00am 5:50pm

MAZEL TOV

Dr. Seymour and Grace Stoll on the birth of a granddaughter, born to **Mordi & Shaina Citronenbaum**

Let's Talk Sisterhood

with Gina Raphael & Maryjo Schnitzer

In these challenging times, we would like to encourage everyone to not only support the Sisterhood but to continue supporting any organization you are comfortable with, for our brothers and sisters in Israel. Am Yisrael Chai!



Additionally, the Sisterhood is initiating a daily Tehillim text message. We welcome your participation.

More Sisterhood programming is in the works. Shabbat Shalom!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

MARK PERL

SHERI
SCHLESINGER

JASON BAYER

LIZ GREENSPAN

JASMINE AZOUZ

JAMES
FOGELMAN

SHERRI
FOGELMAN

WESTON
RICHTER

ADAM KAUFLE

Yahrtzeits

John Ghatan

Yaakov ben Yahya z"l

Father of

Sheilagh Sadeghi

Yahrtzeit - 10 Cheshvan

Gerald Silver

Yaakov ben Shmuel David z"l

Father of

David Silver

Yahrtzeit - 11 Cheshvan

Show your support for Israel
with an Israeli Flag

Big 3 x 5 flags - \$8.00/flag

Small for car - \$3/piece

T-shirts with Flag Of Israel - \$6.00

Special order T-shirts

S-XL \$5, 2XL & 3 XL is \$7

send logo & design

5 days turn around time for custom items

Yossi Behal - 818-968-9660

Offprice2015@yahoo.com

Cards & Letters for Israeli Soldiers

The organization Never Alone - לעולם לא לבד - in Israel has agreed to distribute handwritten cards and letters to Israeli soldiers on active duty. If you or your children wrote a letter and would like to include them in our shipment, please drop them off at the Synagogue by

Monday, October 23rd, at 12 noon.

Thank you to the schools who have already sent us letters written by their students: Yeshivah Ohr Eliyahu, Temple Israel of Hollywood Religious School, Chabad of Bel Air Religious School, and Bais Yaakov. And thank you to the many individuals who have written cards and dropped them off at the shul. Your kindness and personal support for the IDF soldiers means so much to them.

9261 Alden Drive, Beverly Hills, 90210

HADRANALACH

A beautiful community initiative

Please join the Los Angeles-Pico-Beverly Hills community in completing Tanach and Gemara Seder Moed.

May the collective learning serve as a zechus and protection for everyone in Eretz Yisrael, a zechus for the soldiers on the front line and the captives in Gaza.

The goal is to complete our learning as a community by Motzei Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah, November 11th.

*Please see the links below to sign up to commit to learn Dafim of Gemara or Perakim of Tanach



Gemara Tanach

SUPPORT ISRAEL

As soon as the news hit over Shemini Atzeret about the Hamas massacre in southern Israel, our community swung into action and has donated countless hours and resources to ensuring that IDF soldiers and displaced communities are taken care of, and all their needs addressed. We have already raised significant funds of money to be distributed in Israel and we urge you to continue supporting our fundraising efforts.

Please use the link below to make a donation to help Israel at this difficult time. Please be generous with your support. Every dollar raised will be used to fund the critical needs of the communities that were decimated by Hamas terrorists during the massacre. Every recipient will be personally vetted by Rabbi Dunner to ensure that every dollar gets to where it is most needed.



DONATE NOW

WWW.YINBH.ORG/ISRAEL

You can also mail checks to
9261 Alden Drive, Beverly Hills, 90210

LOS ANGELES ASIFA

Maintaining the Chizuk

OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN ERETZ
YISROEL STILL NEED OUR TEFILLOS!

Monday, October 23, 2023

7:30 Divrei Chizuk | **7:55** Tehilim | **8:10** Maariv

For Men, Women, and Children



Divrei Chizuk and Hadracha via video hookup from

HARAV ELYA BRUDNY

Chaver Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah, Rosh Yeshivas Mir

1 Asifa, 2 locations:

La Brea and Pico:

Moshe Ganz Hall - 360 N. La Brea

*(Parking restrictions of the 300 and 400 blocks of
Sycamore, Orange, and Mansfield will be lifted)*

Valley:

Shaarey Zedek - 12800 Chandler Blvd

