

# Tefilla Notebook

4 Tevet • Mikeitz

December 15-16, 2023

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



Dear Members and Friends,

It has been a remarkable week – Beverly Hills was all over the news, in the U.S. and across the world. But this time, not for celebrity shenanigans or glitzy movie gossip – it was because of a violent hate crime. Truthfully, I'm still trying to get my head around it.

Last Saturday morning, two stalwart members of our community, Raphy and Rivka Nissel, were walking to shul for Shabbat services, when they were suddenly set upon by a violent stranger. The attacker, Jarris Jay Silagi, yelled, 'Jew, give me your jewelry!' He then used his belt buckle to hit Raphy over the head, causing a laceration that required several stitches.

Rather than yielding to their assailant, the Nissels yelled for help and gave chase. Shocked by their vigorous response, Silagi ran off, but he was soon arrested by the police. Silagi was later charged with various felonies – including assault with a deadly weapon, attempted robbery, assault by means of force likely to produce great bodily injury, and elder abuse. On Tuesday, Silagi pled not guilty to the charges, and he is currently being held on \$1,310,000 bail.

Shockingly, this incident occurred just an hour after Silagi had been released without bail for a misdemeanor. Silagi also has an extensive rap sheet and is obviously a career criminal. Despite all that, what makes this latest crime stand out even more is that it involved an antisemitic outburst. Clearly, the explosion of antisemitism that has erupted across the United States since the Hamas-perpetrated October 7 massacre in Southern Israel and Israel's military response in Gaza has seeped into every level of society. Jews wherever they live are now considered targets – for being Jews! It is open season against Jews, and no Jew is safe from attack.

To be fair, the support for the Nissels and the Jewish community since the attack has been noteworthy. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and California Governor Gavin Newsom both condemned the attack, and highlighted the antisemitic aspect of the assault, as did Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón. The Beverly Hills Police Department has also been eager to emphasize their increased efforts going forward to ensure community safety, particularly for religious institutions and Jews walking the streets, in light of the attack and the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict.

But somehow all this supportive froth seems hollow, at best. The recent paroxysm of antisemitism – marked by attacks against Jews and visible symbols of the Jewish faith – cannot be mitigated or prevented by sanctimonious virtue signaling and faux outrage. On Tuesday, beleaguered Harvard president, Claudine Gay, attended a public Menorah lighting hosted by Harvard's Chabad representative, Rabbi Herschy Zarchi. The previous day, Gay told the Harvard Crimson that "threats to our Jewish students have no place at Harvard, and will never go unchallenged."

But Rabbi Zarchi's heartfelt address at the menorah lighting told a different story. Apparently, the powers-that-be at Harvard insisted that the public menorah had to be dismantled each night. "After everyone leaves the Yard, we're going to pack it up," Zarchi revealed. "We have to hide it somewhere," he said, as Harvard won't "allow us to leave the menorah here overnight, because there's fear that it'll be vandalized." How exactly is that 'threats against Jews never going unchallenged'?

President Gay? It sounds more like 'Harvard has capitulated to bigots'.

And to be clear, for those who insist that anti-Zionism is not the same as antisemitism – how do you reconcile the fact that a Jewish religious symbol in Harvard is being targeted by vandals in the wake of the October 7 massacre, or that Jews walking in Beverly Hills are being targeted? I am willing to accept that there are passionate anti-Israel activists who are not necessarily antisemites. But are there any anti-Israel activists willing to concede that Israel's actions in Gaza are being used as a cover by antisemites to feast on what animates them most – unfiltered Jew-hatred and unfettered Jew-targeting? Because it would appear that there are a lot more of this kind of anti-Israel activist than of the other kind.

As we all grapple with the unsettling rise of antisemitism, from the streets of Beverly Hills to the halls of Harvard, and in multiple other places across the country and around the world, this sudden turn of events must become an urgent wake-up call. In the final analysis, despite our best efforts over so many years, and the social capital we have invested in our political leaders and into our national institutions, it is time to acknowledge that our ultimate security lies not in human efforts, but in God.

King David's words in Psalm 146:3, "Do not put your trust in princes," resonate as profoundly today as when they were first recorded over three millennia ago. It is also a lesson vividly illustrated in the biblical story of Joseph, as expounded by the late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. Notwithstanding Joseph's exceptional acumen and strengths, his fate was not exclusively contingent on human actions, but rather on Divine will.

Rabbi Sacks writes about Joseph's reliance on Pharaoh's butler to get out of prison, a trust that was met with disappointment, as the Torah records at the end of Parshat Vayeishev (Gen. 40:23): "The butler did not remember Joseph; he forgot him." As a result of putting his faith in the butler to effect his release, Joseph languished in prison for a further two years, and only then did he experience his elevation to great power, as recorded at the beginning of Parshat Mikeitz. As Rabbi Sacks puts it, "God answers our prayers, but often not when we thought or how we thought. Joseph sought to get out of prison, and he did get out of prison... but not immediately, and not because the butler kept his promise."

Joseph's experience mirrors our own experiences, where human promises and what we imagined were guaranteed protections have proven to be unreliable. Although we must always work tirelessly for safety and justice via human means, the outcome of our efforts often rests in Hands that are far more powerful than our own.

As we stand up against the current wave of antisemitism, we should remember that our strength lies not just in our communal resilience and external support from loyal gentile friends, but far more in our faith in God, which must be constant and unequivocal. God's message to Joseph was that expecting the butler to come through while losing sight of Divine help was not seeing the wood for the trees. Joseph's journey from despair to triumph teaches us about the balance of effort and faith. We do our part, but we must recognize that the final deliverance, often unforeseen and unexpected, comes from a higher source.

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom, Rabbi Pini Dunner

## FRIDAY, DEC 15

4:27 PM CANDLELIGHTING  
4:30 PM KABBALAT SHABBAT

## SATURDAY, DEC 16

8:30 AM GEMARA SHIUR  
9:15 AM SHACHARIT  
4:35 PM MINCHA  
5:25 PM MAARIV  
5:27 PM SHABBAT ENDS

## WEEKDAY DAVENING

Sun	8:00am	4:35pm
Mon- Thur	7:00am	4:35pm
Fri	7:00am	4:35pm

**BRING THEM HOME NOW**

## THANK YOU

Seudah Shlishit this week is sponsored by **Benny and Shahla Zaghi** in memory of **Benny's mother, Zinat Bat Meir a"h**, whose yahrtzeit is on the 4th of Tevet.

# Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to **Rena Perl and Daniel Frohlich**. Rena married Daniel on December 10th. Daniel's parents are **Mike Frohlich and Vera**

**Guerzstein**. Rena's parents are **Mark and Marlene Perl**. The couple will reside in Jerusalem



# Yahrtzeits

## Leonard Stoll

Chaim Aryeh ben Moshe z"l  
Father of  
**Seymour Stoll**  
Yahrtzeit - 4 Tevet

## Imre Schaeffer

Noach ben Moshe z"l  
Father of  
**George Schaeffer**  
Yahrtzeit - 8 Tevet

## Chaya Gitel Shprintza

Chaya Gitel Shprintza bat Dovid a"h  
Mother of  
**David Frankel**  
Yahrtzeit - 4 Tevet

## Joe Fialkov

Yosef Zalman ben Chaim z"l  
Father of  
**Howie Fialkov**  
Yahrtzeit - 8 Tevet

## Eliahu Gaba

Eliahu ben Mordechai z"l  
Father of  
**Ruth Gaba**  
Yahrtzeit - 6 Tevet

## Yisroel David Mikel z"l

Father of  
**Chavi Hertz**  
Yahrtzeit - 9 Tevet

## Margaret Friedman

Miriam Margarita bat Mendel a"h  
Mother of  
**Jerry Friedman**  
Yahrtzeit - 7 Tevet

## Gertrude Fox

Gittel bat Rav Yitzchak a"h  
Mother of  
**Janice Kaufler**  
Yahrtzeit - 10 Tevet

## Need Piano Lessons?

Call **Dr. Yakov Birman**  
**310-467-4045**

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

**RYAN COHEN**     **JEREMY WIZMAN**  
**ARIELLA SASSOVER**     **SYDNEY HOGAN**  
**BENJAMIN SAMUEL**     **ARIK CASDEN**  
   **LIAM MOSTADIM**

## Happy Anniversary

*Evan & Liz Greenspan*  
*David & Allison Sostchen*  
*Samuel & Sue Varon*  
*Hillel & Ruthie Kellerman*  
*Bob Zeller & Nadine Gerson*

## ישיבת YINBH BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE

## 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. Each 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](http://WWW.YINBH.ORG/ISRAEL)

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

☎ 310-276-7650

✉ [office@yinbh.org](mailto:office@yinbh.org)

🌐 [www.yinbh.org](http://www.yinbh.org)



# EREWHONUKKAH



י"ב ש"ת  
BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE

## TARGET PRACTICE

**January 8th, 2024 at 6pm**

Location is in the San Fernando Valley and address will be given upon confirmation of RSVP.



Only for those with prior gun experience.



\$100 per person includes ammunition, targets, and gun lane. Gun rentals are available for an extra charge

REGISTER AT

[www.yinbh.org/targetpractice](http://www.yinbh.org/targetpractice)

LIMITED SPOTS AVAILABLE





# SOLIDARITY TRIP TO ISRAEL



**YINBH**  
BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE

## **The trip will be a 3 day mission to:**

- Attend dedication ceremony of YINBH Nahal Haredi apartment
  - Visit wounded IDF soldiers in the hospital, with gifts
  - Visit kibbutzim affected by the October 7th massacres
    - Meet with released hostages and their families
    - Host a BBQ for soldiers at an army base
- Volunteer with packing and distributing essential needs
  - Meet with government officials & dignitaries

## **Trip Details**

Dates: January 23, 24 & 25

Cost: \$1200 per person

includes transportation within Israel, security, site visits,  
support staff & meals.

Participants will arrange their own travel to Israel,  
lodging & travel insurance.

For more info & signup goto  
**[www.yinbh.org/israelmission](http://www.yinbh.org/israelmission)**

Questions? Email [carly@yinbh.org](mailto:carly@yinbh.org)  
or call the office on (310) 276-7650