

# Tefilla Notebook

26 Kislev • Vayeshev • Birkat HaChodesh

*Happy Chanukah*



December 8-9, 2023

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



Dear Members and Friends,

The 1945 satirical novella "Animal Farm" by George Orwell depicts a group of farm animals who rebel against their human farmer, hoping to create a society where animals can be equal, free, and happy. But their idealistic aspirations are eventually crushed under the dictatorship of a pig fittingly named Napoleon, who is supported by a group of snobby pigs and a herd of adulating sheep.

Initially, one of the Seven Commandments established by the animals to govern their new society is "All animals are equal." But towards the end of the book this slogan is altered by the pigs to "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." The changed mantra reflects the rise of a new elite class among the animals, specifically the pigs, who start to resemble the oppressive human rulers they initially overthrew. The altered commandment symbolizes a betrayal of the revolution's original ideals, and the establishment of a new tyranny under Napoleon and the pigs.

Orwell's "Some animals are more equal than others" is a piercing critique of political hypocrisy. It reflects the reality seen in governing entities around the world that loudly champion the ideals of equality and justice for all, yet subtly, and sometimes not so subtly, create an elevated class among those under their jurisdiction. This paradox of proudly proclaimed egalitarianism contrasted with the reality of selective privilege forms a cornerstone of Orwell's sharply observed narrative, and it remains as accurate today as when it was first published.

This past Tuesday, we were presented with a shocking live-action version of Orwell's perceptive observation during the House Committee on Education and the Workforce hearing about antisemitism on college campuses. The gathering heard from three presidents of Ivy League universities, Claudine Gay of Harvard University, Elizabeth Magill of the University of Pennsylvania, and Sally Kornbluth of M.I.T. All three universities have witnessed a dramatic spike in overt and even violent antisemitism over the past few weeks, since the Hamas-perpetrated October 7th massacre against Jews in Southern Israel.

It was a perfect opportunity for these senior representatives of three bastions of academic excellence to publicly distance themselves from the radical elements that have overtaken student activism on their campuses, and turned their institutions into cesspools of ugly prejudice and hatred against Jews. Instead, they obfuscated and used every rhetorical trick in the book to evade admitting the truth, which is this: on their college campuses Jews are not treated equal to other minorities, which means that Jewish students can be targeted in ways that other minority groups can never be targeted, and those who target them will not face formal consequences.

Consider this astounding exchange: "Yes or no, does calling for the genocide of Jews violate [your university's] rules of bullying and harassment?" – Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York repeatedly asked this question to the witnesses. Kornbluth initially answered, "If targeted at individuals not making public statements," and then added, "I have not heard calling for the genocide for Jews on our campus." Stefanik pointed out that M.I.T. students had publicly called for "Intifada", which is a euphemism for violence and terrorism against Jews. "I've heard chants which can be antisemitic depending on the context," Kornbluth responded. In what context is calling for an Intifada not antisemitic, one wonders. The answer is simple and tragic: in a world where Jewish rights are not equal to the rights of others, calling for an Intifada is not considered antisemitic. Although, imagine calling for an Intifada against blacks, or Asians, or transgenders – would anyone hesitate to consider the context?

Magill was equally slippery: "If the speech turns into conduct, it can be

harassment." Stefanik kept going: "I am asking, specifically calling for the genocide of Jews, does that constitute bullying or harassment?" Magill responded, "If it is directed, severe, pervasive – it is harassment... it is a context dependent decision, Congresswoman." Stefanik appeared stunned. "It's a context dependent decision? That's your testimony today? Calling for the genocide of Jews is depending upon the context – that is not bullying or harassment? This is the easiest question to answer!"

The pantomime continued with Magill's next answer: "If the speech becomes conduct, it can be harassment." This time Stefanik was even more shocked. "Conduct meaning committing the act of genocide? The speech is not harassment? This is unacceptable! Ms. Magill, I'm going to give you one more opportunity for the world to see your answer. Does calling for the genocide of Jews violate Penn's Code of Conduct when it comes to bullying and harassment, yes or no?" But Magill still refused to be drawn. "It can be harassment," she responded after a pause and then a smirk.

At this point, Stefanik moved on to Harvard's president, Claudine Gay. "Does calling for the genocide of Jews violate Harvard's rules of bullying and harassment, yes or no?" It was almost as if the three presidents had colluded and rehearsed their lines in advance. Perhaps they had. "It can be, depending on the context," Gay responded. By this time Stefanik was incredulous. "What's the context?" she asked. Gay shot back, "Targeted at an individual." Stefanik's jaw dropped. "It's targeted at Jewish students, Jewish individuals. Do you understand your testimony is dehumanizing them? Do you understand that dehumanization is part of antisemitism?"

Gay didn't need to answer. We all know the answer. The three pigs had made their views very clear. Dehumanizing Jews doesn't matter. Or, it only matters when the powers-that-be decide it matters; Jewish victims of dehumanizing antisemitism have no say in whether it matters or not. Because "some animals are more equal than others."

"This is why you should resign," Stefanik told Kornbluth, Magill, and Gay, as she finished her round of questions. "These are unacceptable answers across the board." Although of course they won't resign, because on their Animal Farms they are Napoleon, and they are fully supported by similarly snobby pigs and herds of adulating sheep.

This week, in Parshat Vayeishev, we read the story of Joseph and his brothers. The brothers had a grudge against Joseph and unjustly targeted him. Motivated by jealousy and blinded by hatred, they accused him of crimes he had never committed, and eventually sold him off into slavery to Egypt. There he encounters even more injustice – he is thrown into prison after being falsely accused of attempting to rape his master's wife. The Talmudic sages note that Joseph's brothers were convinced their treatment of Joseph was equitable and just; they were seemingly unable to put themselves in Joseph's shoes and see things from his perspective. In fact, as far as they were concerned his perspective didn't count – only their perspective mattered. Crucially, they had the power to be judge and jury, despite their inherent biases – and their refusal to be objective resulted in family turmoil that took decades to come right.

Joseph's resilience and eventual rise to power in Egypt, despite his brothers' treachery, offers us some hope from the dawn of Jewish history. It reminds us that even in the face of overwhelming injustice and prejudice, integrity and truth do eventually prevail. This parallel is a poignant reminder that despite the current dominance of unfair and biased attitudes against Jews, and the lack of equity in the treatment of Jews as the current crisis in the Middle East continues to rage, the potential for a just outcome still remains. Let us pray it is not too long in coming.

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom Rabbi Pini Dunner

**FRIDAY, DEC 8**  
4:26 PM CANDLELIGHTING  
4:30 PM KABBALAT SHABBAT  
**SATURDAY, DEC 9**  
8:30 AM GEMARA SHIUR  
9:15 AM SHACHARIT  
4:30 PM MINCHA  
5:20 PM MAARIV  
5:26 PM SHABBAT ENDS

## WEEKDAY DAVENING

Sun 8:00am 4:30pm  
Mon- Thur 7:00am 4:30pm  
Fri 7:00am 4:30pm

**Rosh Chodesh is on Wednesday**

**BRING THEM HOME NOW**

## EARLIEST TIMES TO LIGHT MENORAH

**Thursday, December 7th**  
1 candle 5:24pm

**Friday, December 8th**  
2 candles 4:26pm (before shabbos candles)

**Saturday, December 9th**  
3 candles 5:26pm

**Sunday, December 10th**  
4 candles 5:25pm

**Monday, December 11th**  
5 candles 5:25pm

**Tuesday, December 12th**  
6 candles 5:25pm

**Wednesday, December 13th**  
7 candles 5:25pm

**Thursday, December 14th**  
8 candles 5:26pm



## Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to **Ruthie & Hillel Kellerman** on the birth of a new granddaughter, **Sima Rachel**, born to **Daniel & Sari Kellerman**. Mazal Tov to siblings **Fraida, Dovid, Moshe Chaim, Hadassah, and Shalom**. Mazal Tov to grandparents **Mikey & Rebecca Kahan-Frank** and to great-grandmother **Vicky Praw**.

# Yahrtzeits

**Leonard Melvin Rosenthal**  
Father of  
**Karen Fisher**  
Yahrtzeit - 26 Kislev

**Bernard Finkel**  
Baruch ben Oizer Halevi z"l  
Brother of  
**Harry Finkel**  
Yahrtzeit - 27 Kislev

**Stephen Rothman**  
Shlomo Leib Gavriel ben Yosef z"l  
Father of  
**Eric Rothman, Elisha Rothman & Auralee Ring**  
Husband of  
**Rosalyn Rothman**  
Yahrtzeit - 28 Kislev

**Mickey Tencer**  
Mother of  
**Karynne Tencer**  
**Robert Tencer**  
**Arnie Tencer**  
Yahrtzeit - 30 Kislev

**Sheldon Robert Raphael**  
Zalman Yehudah ben Tzvi z"l  
Father of  
**Regina Raphael**  
Yahrtzeit - 2 Tevet

**Joel Bernstein**  
Yosef Yitzhak ben Yechiel z"l  
Brother of  
**Barbara Bernstein**  
Yahrtzeit - 3 Tevet

## Need Piano Lessons?

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

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

**NORMAN SOLOMON** **HILLEL KELLERMAN**  
**MOSHE SASSOVER** **BILL LOPATIN**  
**SAM MOSTADIM** **THEODORE PUSTILNIKOV**  
**AMIN LARI** **MANUCHER MOSTADIM**  
**ARLEEN TANENBAUM** **DANIEL ROSS**  
**BLAKE SPENCER**

## THANK YOU

Thank you to **Bill & Joan Lopatin** and **Hillel & Ruthie Kellerman** for sponsoring this week's Kiddush in honor of **Bill and Hillel's Birthday**.

Thank you to **Esther and Ari Lastenko** for co-sponsoring this week's kiddush in honor of their families conversion and their wedding. Mazal Tov!

Thank you to **Benny & Shahla Zaghi** for sponsoring Seudah Shlishit in memory of Benny's brother, **Avraham Jamshid ben Rahman z"l**, whose yahrtzeit is on the 1st of Tevet.

## Happy Anniversary

*Rabbi Pini & Sabine  
Dunner  
Rabbi Alan & Sandy  
Kalinsky  
George & Suzi  
Fischmann*

## 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**

Thank You to **Jerry & Jean Friedman** for sponsoring next week's parsha shiur in memory of Jerry's mother, **Margaret Friedman, Miriam Margarita bat Mendel a"h**, whose yahrtzeit is on the 7th of Tevet.



## STEVEN & VIVIAN DORFMAN KEILIM MIKVAH



The Keilim Mikvah is open for use. You can buzz-in for access via the intercom at the entrance to the garage, during weekday office hours. It is customary to give tzedakah before doing to mitzvah of tovelling Keilim. You can give a donation directly to the keilim mikvah by visiting [yinhb.org/keilim](http://yinhb.org/keilim)

## HACHNASAT ORCHIM

In an effort to continue to make our shul a warm and welcoming environment, we ask that all our congregants introduce themselves to at least one new person this shabbat.



יחב 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@yinhb.org](mailto:office@yinhb.org)

[www.yinhb.org](http://www.yinhb.org)

יחב YINBH  
BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE

SOHACHESKI FAMILY CENTER  
Chai Lifeline  
WEST COAST

This Chanukah

**GIVE  
THE GIFT  
OF HOPE**



Donate a Toy to  
a Child Living  
With Illness

NEW TOYS ONLY

### 2 WAYS TO GIVE



Choose from our clients'  
Amazon "Wish List":  
[wc-toydrive.com](http://wc-toydrive.com)



Drop gifts at our office  
475 S. Robertson Blvd.  
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

THANK YOU

Please email all questions to  
[mharrosh@chailifeline.org](mailto:mharrosh@chailifeline.org)





# SOLIDARITY TRIP TO ISRAEL



**ייןב"ה** YINBH  
BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE

## **The trip would include approximately a 3 day mission to:**

- Visit wounded IDF soldiers in the hospital, with gifts
- Visit kibbutzim affected by the October 7th massacres
  - Visit and meet with 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
- Attend dedication ceremony of YINBH Nahal Haredi apartment

## **Trip Details**

Dates: Week starting Sunday Jan 21

(Tentative mission days are 23, 24, 25)

Participants will arrange their own travel and lodging.

YINBH will arrange transport, food and all site visits

Email [carly@yinhb.org](mailto:carly@yinhb.org)

or call the office on (310) 276-7650 to express interest.