

This week's Tefilla Notebook is sponsored by **Richard & Judith Weston** in memory of Richard's mother, **Ruth Weston a"h**, whose yahrtzeit is on the 13th of Tevet.

Tefilla Notebook

14 Tevet • Parshat Veyechi

January 6-7, 2023

Steven Dorfman, President

Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi

Nati Bar-Am, Chazan

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Dear Members and Friends,

By anyone's standards, the creation of the State of Israel is one of the most extraordinary events of modern history. Ahad Ha'am (1856-1927), a founding father of the Zionist project, cautioned early on against an accelerated campaign for a Jewish state because he feared that Jewish immigration to Palestine would never correlate to the needs and expectations of Zionism's political aspirations, which was why it was preferable to have a solid population foundation before contemplating statehood.

How wrong he was. In 1894, census records show that there were just 43,000 Jews living in Palestine. By 1922, the Jewish population had reached 84,000 Jews, and in 1931 – less than a decade later – that number had already more than doubled, to 175,000. In 1939, on the eve of the Second World War, the number of Jews in Palestine had climbed to 449,000, and in 1947, the last year before Israel formally declared its independence, there were 630,000 Jews.

Once Israel was established as a country, the floodgates were opened, and Jews came to the country in ever-increasing numbers. But whereas Jewish immigration had previously been the purview of non-Jewish authorities, after 1948 it was a Jewish government that determined who was entitled to come into Israel as an immigrant. And there was a whole new dimension – being Jewish meant you were automatically entitled to Israeli citizenship.

Initially, Jewish status was defined by halakha (Jewish religious law). The 1950 Law of Return enshrined the right of any "Jew" to be allowed the right to immigrate to Israel, and the default rubric was the religious laws that had been hallowed over centuries by guardians of Jewish tradition. But that all changed in 1970, when the Law of Return was amended. From then on, anyone who would have been considered Jewish enough for the Nazis to murder as Jews was entitled to Israeli citizenship as a Jew. The conditions for a Jewish "right of return" were extended to include anyone with at least one Jewish grandparent, and anyone married to a Jew.

This widening of the net was adopted with the highest ideals in mind – namely, to accommodate Jewish immigrants escaping oppression in the Soviet Union, many of whom were from families that included gentiles. But it hardly needs to be said that this definition of "who is a Jew?" was and remains a far cry from the traditional classification of Jewishness. Of course, the majority of those who have immigrated into Israel since its founding, even since 1970, have been Jews as defined by the millennia-old laws which have held the Jewish people together, even as every other

aspect of Jewish existence militated against Jewish survival.

To be clear, the Law of Return cuts to the heart of what both Judaism and modern Israel are all about. After 2,000 years of bitter exile, the Law of Return brought to life the prophecies of a Jewish return to the Land of Israel – prophecies heard by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the book of Genesis, and shared by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy. And these same prophecies illuminated the darkest moments of Jewish history, via Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, all of whom predicted the miraculous return of Jews from every point on the globe to the land of their heritage – Israel.

No one can deny that the constant flow of Jewish immigration into Israel has been a modern-day miracle. Israelis – and every Jew around the world – love and cherish the immigrants, and feel grateful and blessed that so many have chosen to make Israel their home. As for immigrants who don't meet halakhic Jewish identity criteria, but have already become Israeli citizens, they should lovingly be brought closer to Judaism and then converted according to halakha. Indeed, this should be a primary priority for Israel.

But – and here is the rider! – there is no such thing as a blank check. Every country has laws on their lawbooks that made sense at some point in their history, but which no longer make any sense today. From the 1970s through the 1990s, the needs of those seeking to escape the Soviet Union, and the dreadful mess that followed its collapse, were intense. But it is now more than 30 years since the collapse of the Iron Curtain – surely anyone who truly felt an affinity for the Jewish people and their country, so strongly that they sought to immigrate to Israel, has already done so.

Shockingly, over the past few years the percentage of immigrants relying on the grandparent clause has risen to over 50%. That number speaks for itself. Israel is no longer a country of refuge for immigrants escaping persecution, rather it has become an attractive option for those seeking economic betterment. It is also a fact that many of these immigrants become citizens and then immediately move back to FSU countries while taking advantage of the benefits they receive as Israelis.

Those who voted for the 1970 amendment never imagined a scenario in which Israel's economic status would become so attractive that gentiles would take advantage of it to gain Israeli citizenship. In 1970, with Israel still a struggling economy and surrounded by countries hellbent on its destruction, gentiles admitted into Israel under the amendment were few and far between. Fast forward more than 50 years, and everything has changed.

To illustrate the preposterous nature of this unintended loophole: it has now become possible for dozens of people from one family, none of whom have ever considered themselves Jewish, nor will they be considered

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 6
4:41pm CANDLELIGHTING
4:45pm SERVICES

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7
8:30 am GEMARA SHIUR
9:15 am SHACHARIT
4:50 pm MINCHA
5:40 pm MAARIV
5:41 pm SHABBAT ENDS

WEEKDAY DAVENING

Sun 8:00am 4:45pm
Mon-Thurs 7:00am 4:45pm
Fri 7:00am 4:50pm

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Igor & Lisa Korbatov

MAZAL TOV

Daniel Strum on the publication of his first children's book "**Banana Court - Case 1: The Case of the Bad Apples!**"



Marilyn & Jaime Sohacheski on the engagement of their grandson **Shlomo Brothman**, son of **Rabbi Dovid and Jasmine** of Ramat Eshkol on his engagement to **Tzivia Walkin** of Lakewood, daughter of **Aaron and Gitty Walkin**. Granddaughter of **Rav Chaim Wilkin z"l** and **Henny Walkin**.

THANK YOU

Next week's Parsha Shiur is sponsored by **Shawney & Richard Fine** in memory of Shawney's Father, **Joseph Wagner, HaRav Yosef Chaim ben Eliyahu z"l**, whose yahrtzeit is on the 22nd of Tevet.

Ronnie Schwartz

THANK YOU LETTER FROM CHAI LIFELINE WEST COAST TO YINBH BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE

Young Israel of North Beverly Hills
9261 Alden Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90210



SOHACHESKI FAMILY CENTER
Chai Lifeline
WEST COAST

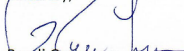
Dear YINBH Members:

The YINBH community has done it again – our office is overflowing with toys! On behalf of our children and families, thank you for so generously participating in the annual Chanukah Toy Drive benefitting Chai Lifeline.

We greatly appreciate the large variety of toys you purchased for us through our Amazon Wish List. Our staff had the pleasure of distributing many of these toys over Chanukah. It was wonderful to see the excitement on the children's faces as they received their gifts and to hear from their parents how touched they were by the outpouring of support. Thanks to your generosity, we restocked our toy room with the remainder of the toys and will use them throughout the year for hospital care packages, pick-me-up gifts and birthday presents for children whose lives are overshadowed by illness or loss.

Thank you again for being partners in our work and for bringing the gift of happiness to our children.

Sincerely,


Randi Grossman
West Coast Director

YINBH
SISTERHOOD

BOOK GROUP EVENT

LAUREN BELFER

for Her Book "And After The Fire"

Tuesday, January 17th
at 7:30pm

RSVP at yinbh.org/bookgroup



SHABBOS VAYECHI 5783 IS DEDICATED TO
CONFRONTING THE CREMATION CRISIS

the cremation crisis is real

HOW REAL?

One out of every two Jews in
the US will be cremated.

Every 16 minutes, another
Jew is incinerated.

Someone **you** know will likely be cremated.



Your
next door
neighbor



Your
second
cousin



Your
longtime
doctor



Your child's
science
teacher



A friend's
grand-
mother



A resident
you visit at the
nursing home

We have a crisis. **A tragic one.**

AND **YOU** CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

JOIN A WORKSHOP WITH RABBI ELCHONON ZOHN
LEARN HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION

CHOOSE FROM TWO LIVE ZOOM WORKSHOPS

Motzei Shabbos **January 7** 9:00PM EST / 6:00PM PST

Sunday **January 8** 1:00PM EST / 10:00AM PST

endcremation.org



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of Chavre Kadisha



WIZO CALIFORNIA

LITERARY SALON EVENT

FEATURING

COMEDIAN & AUTHOR
MARK SCHIFF

IN CONVERSATION WITH SHIRIN YADEGAR
FOUNDER OF LA MOM MAGAZINE

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18TH, 2023 | 10:30AM
YOUNG ISRAEL NORTH BEVERLY HILLS

TICKETS: \$54

(BOOK INCLUDED FOR FIRST 50 SIGN UPS)

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FOR QUESTIONS OR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE
CONTACT WIZO CALIFORNIA AT 323.206.6403
OR DIRECTOR@WIZOCALIFORNIA.ORG.



**NEXT
SHABBAT**

BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE
YOUNG ISRAEL OF NORTH BEVERLY HILLS

GUEST SPEAKER

Shabbat 14th January 2023

Rabbi Raphael Zarum

Dean of the London School of Jewish Studies

Rabbi Dr. Zarum will address the community at 11:00am
The service will be followed by a Kiddush Luncheon

**SPONSORED
BY:**

Maggie & Michael Bayer in
memory of Maggie's
mother, Bella Magenheim,
Bayla bat Shmuel a"h,
whose yahrtzeit is on the
22nd of Tevet

Ed & Cecile Gromis in
memory of Ed's
mother, Chana Gromis,
Chana bat Moshe
Yehudah HaCohen a"h,
whose yahrtzeit is on
the 7th of Shevet

Helen & Moshe
Sassover in memory of
Helen's mother, Hedy
Orden, Chana bat
Chaim a"h, whose
yahrtzeit is on the 17th
of Tevet

David & Caroline
Azouz in memory
of David's father,
Albert Azouz,
Abraham ben Isaac
z"l, whose yahrtzeit
is on the 2nd of
Shevat

Barbara Bernstein in
memory of her father,
Isadore Bernstein, Yechiel
ben Yitzchak z"l, whose
yahrtzeit is on the 25th of
Tevet

Vera Markowitz in
memory of her
husband, Harold
Markowitz, Benjamin
Tzvi ben Yitzchak z"l,
whose yahrtzeit is on
the 22nd of Tevet

Marilyn & Jaime
Sohacheski in memory
of Marilyn's mother,
Florence Presser, Feige
Neshe bat Binyamin
HaCohen a"h, whose
yahrtzeit is on the 27th
of Tevet

Rabbi Dr Raphael Zarum is Dean of the London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS) where he holds the Rabbi Sacks Chair of Modern Jewish Thought. Rabbi Dr. Zarum lectures extensively and regularly writes articles in the media and contributes scholarly essays for academic journals. He is an acclaimed speaker on a variety of topics who has travelled the globe lecturing at a wide range of Jewish institutions.

**Rabbi Zarum will also be speaking during Kabbalat
Shabbat on January 13th and Seudah Shlishit on Shabbat**