



# Tefilla Notebook

13 Adar II • Vayikra • Parshat Zachor • Purim

March 22-23, 2024

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



Dearest Members & Friends,

This week, a group of American rabbis, cantors, and student clergy, under the banner of an organization called T'ruah, wrote a letter to President Joe Biden expressing their distress over the ongoing conflict enveloping Israelis and Palestinians alike. Citing the verse from scripture, "God is close to the brokenhearted; those crushed in spirit, God delivers" (Psalms 34:19), the group called for an immediate ceasefire and urged the American administration to leverage its global leadership to halt the hostilities.

According to them, "A ceasefire is the only reliable, proven means for securing the release of the remaining hostages and ensuring the provision of desperately needed humanitarian relief to Gaza. Lives hang in the balance." At face value, T'ruah's appeal seems to indicate a deep yearning for peace and the alleviation of suffering. But on closer scrutiny, the letter reveals a profound disconnect from the complex realities on the ground and the intricacies of truly achieving lasting peace and security for everyone involved.

The letter from T'ruah fails to acknowledge the necessity of confronting aggression with strength – specifically so that there can be a peaceful future for Israel and the Palestinians. War, with all its ugliness and tragedy, was never Israel's desire, nor is it welcomed by Israel's supporters across the globe. But the premature cessation of hostilities, particularly if it is driven by external pressures that are devoid of any kind of nuanced understanding of the security dynamics, just risks emboldening Hamas and sowing the seeds of future turmoil, in which death and destruction will inevitably exceed the current horror.

Truthfully, I wish that was it. I wish this was just a letter written by a bunch of naive peace-seekers trying to shift the needle against Israel's military campaign in Gaza. Wouldn't it be great if the letter was merely a misguided but heartfelt attempt by T'ruah to be true to their humanitarian ideals? The problem is that it isn't. Instead, the authors reveal that their stance – despite it being couched in religious language and the platitudes of religious piety – is nothing less than an attack on Israel, on its people, and on its right to defend itself against an existential threat.

How can they claim that their "hearts are broken by the deaths of over 30,000 Palestinians in Gaza – the majority of whom are women and children who bear no responsibility for Hamas's crimes"? Really? As they well know, the Gaza casualty numbers are provided by the Hamas-run "health ministry" – which, to be clear, is not a reliable source by any stretch of the imagination. And by simply trotting out the mindless mantra that "the majority" of those who have died in Gaza are women and children T'ruah has demonstrated that it has become nothing more than a propaganda tool for Hamas. In any event, how many of the "30,000" dead are Hamas combatants – including, tragically, women and young teenagers bearing arms for this evil terrorist outfit? And how many women and children have died because Hamas has cynically used them as human shields? Of course, T'ruah makes no mention of this.

And how is it that T'ruah has not called for President Biden's administration to use "the full force of America's leverage and global leadership" to get Hamas to lay down its arms, so that the people of Gaza can begin charting a path towards normalcy and rebuilding? The cause of Gaza's devastation is not Israel – it is Hamas, which has cynically engineered this crisis so that international sympathy is focused on Gaza, which has been shattered and destroyed as a direct consequence of the October 7th Hamas massacre in Israel.

But it gets even worse. The concluding segment of T'ruah's letter targets the actions and policies of the Israeli government, and criticizes settlers in the West Bank, accusing them of deliberately escalating violence and of attempting to ethnically cleanse Palestinians. Inexplicably, the letter goes on to call for actions against Israel's government, and against organizations and individuals that T'ruah accuses of promoting violence. These calls are ludicrous and one-sided, and they stand out in a letter in which there is no call for the true sources of the conflict, namely Hamas, Iran and Qatar, to be sanctioned – or even called out – for their endless bloodlust. With this omission, T'ruah has revealed its hand; the signatories to the letter, notwithstanding their attempt to occupy the high moral ground, are no more than political and ideological allies of diehard antisemites and those who wish to see Israel perish.

In stark contrast to the positions outlined in T'ruah's letter stands the wisdom of the Shem Mishmuel, who offers a timeless perspective on the essence of a genuine rhetorical contribution. In the Shem Mishmuel's commentary to Parshat Vayikra, he delves into the spiritual significance of contributions to the Mishkan, and Moses' unique role in this process.

The Midrash Tanhuma on Vayikra tells us that Moses never had the chance to donate anything material to the Mishkan, and that this upset him very much. The Midrash opens with a conversation between God and Moses, in which God tells Moses that because his spoken words are uncontaminated by material desires or concerns, they are considered the ultimate gift towards the Mishkan's construction. Moses instructing the workers to build the Mishkan was the greatest contribution of all – greater than all the gold and silver, and all precious jewels donated by everyone else.

The Shem Mishmuel finds this idea that the purity of words used by a leader represents the pinnacle of leadership to be exceptionally significant. Moses was above material distractions, so he wasn't required to contribute physical objects – his words were the purest gift he could give. But had Moses' words contained even a smidgen of personal interest, they would have been totally devalued. Which leads us to the question: where does the line between genuine advocacy for peace and the purity of intention stand in the context of T'ruah's letter? Simply put: had T'ruah's letter been entirely focused on humanitarian concerns for Israelis and Palestinians, one might have concluded that the signatories had nothing but the purest motives. But by engaging in political attacks and unfounded mudslinging, the letter betrays a nasty streak that disqualifies its authors from saying anything. Only a physical contribution can count. Unless they are in the field, fighting alongside the IDF, or volunteering their time and resources for the welfare of those in Israel they claim to represent, their words have no value whatsoever.

In applying the Shem Mishmuel's insights to the present conflict, it becomes evident that any call for peace by those who wish to lead must be grounded in a realistic appraisal of the situation, and the avoidance of personal agenda-driven meanspirited attacks on ideological adversaries. As we navigate these turbulent and troubling times, the leadership style we need is that of Moses. We certainly don't need the vacuous clichés and empty words of those who seek to make a name for themselves as contributors to the cause, but whose contribution is destructive and unhelpful. Instead of betraying their faith and their people, I would urge the T'ruah activists to strive for a lasting resolution – grounded in a realistic set of proposals untarnished by political vendettas and virtue signaling, and which will ensure the well-being of all those who are suffering from the effects of the current war.

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom, Purim Sameach and a great week ahead,  
 Rabbi Pini Dunner

## SHABBAT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, MARCH 22nd	SATURDAY, MARCH 23rd
6:49 PM CANDLELIGHTING	8:30 AM GEMARA SHIUR
6:30 PM KABBALAT SHABBAT	9:15 AM SHACHARIT
	10:30 AM PARSHAT ZACHOR*
	6:25PM PURIM SHIUR
	6:50 PM MINCHA
	7:50 PM MAARIV
	7:46 PM SHABBAT ENDS
	8:00 PM MEGILLA READING

## WEEKDAY DAVENING

Sun	8:00am	6:50pm
Mon-Thurs	7:00am	6:50pm
Fri	7:00am	6:30pm



## PURIM DAY SCHEDULE Sunday, March 24th

Shacharit: 8:00am
Megilla Reading: 8:30am
Second Megilla Reading: 10:30am
Mincha: 3:45pm
Last Chance Megilla Reading: 4:00pm
Purim Seudah Begins: 4:00pm
Maariv: 7:30pm

\*There will be a second reading of Parshat Zachor immediately following services.

# Yahrtzeits

## Esther Samuel

Esther bat Dovid a"h  
Mother of  
**Joseph Samuel**  
Yahrtzeit - 16 Adar

## Benzi Dunner

Benzion ben Avraham Moshe  
Halevi z"l  
Brother of  
**Rabbi Pini Dunner**  
Yahrtzeit - 16 Adar

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Rina Lauchmeimer

Elliot Sassover

Vivian Novack

Rita Lewkowicz

Spencer Fogelman

Ashley Rubinstein

Mushky Perlstein

## MAZAL TOV

Hillel and Ruthie Kellerman on a new granddaughter, **Sima Chaya**, born to **Avi and Sarah Matanky!** Mazal Tov to siblings **Yaakov** and **Asher**. Mazal Tov to grandparents **Rabbi Leonard and Margaret Matanky** and Great-Grandmother **Mrs. Vicky Praw**.

## TZEDAKAH FOR PURIM

**Matanot La'Evyonim** is one of the four designated mitzvot on Purim, along with hearing the **Megilla**, **Mishloach Manot** and **Seudat Purim**.

As part of the unifying theme of the Purim festival, it is a mitzvah to give money to needy families in the community, so that they too can afford to celebrate this festival properly, and have some welcome respite from their difficult financial circumstances, both on Purim, and after Purim.

This year, as in past years, Rabbi Dunner will be distributing the money raised from our membership for Matanot La'evyonim to needy families here in Los Angeles and in Israel.

If you would like to pay with a check, checks can be made payable to "Young Israel of North Beverly Hills". Please write on the memo of the checks "Purim Appeal". You can also donate online at [yinh.org/donate](http://yinh.org/donate)

YINBH  
BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE  
PRESENTS  
**PURIM SEUDAH IN LOS ANGELES**  
A COMMUNITY PURIM SEUDAH  
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ADULT: \$72 CHILDREN: \$36 (CHILDREN UNDER 2 ARE FREE)

We look forward to celebrating at our Purim Seudah with our wonderful community and friends!

## GUEST SPEAKERS FROM ELMET

Shabbat, April 6, 2024

### ÉRIC Danon

Former French Ambassador to Israel, Knight of the French Légion d'Honneur and the Ordre National du Mérite. Ambassador Danon was the first-ever Jewish citizen of France, appointed French Ambassador to Israel.

### DR. ARIÉ BENSEMHOUN

CEO of the French office of the European Leadership Network (ELNET). Dr. Bensemhoun has played a central role in the France-Israel relationship since 2011.

### DAVID SIEGEL

President of Friends of ELNET. Ambassador Siegel is the former Consul General of Israel in Los Angeles and former Chief of Staff to three Israeli Ambassadors to the U.S.

**KIDDUSH LUNCHEON FOLLOWING SERVICES**

**MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW**

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

David & Silvie Czinn

Aaron & Lillian Fuchs

Jason Fuchs

Jerry & Jean Friedman

Ari & Esther Lastenko

Lee Samson

Adam & Jesse Shaked

# THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART IN OUR VERY SUCCESSFUL MISHLOACH CAMPAIGN THIS YEAR!

Jonathan & Jessica Akhavan  
 Susan & Michael Baum  
 Michael & Maggie Bayer  
 Donald & Manya Beier  
 Lizbeth Berman  
 Barbara Bernstein  
 Rabbi Heshie & Rookie Billet  
 Jonathan & Julie Boyer  
 Ruth Brandt  
 William & June Brenner  
 Elliott & Robin Broidy  
 Arik Casden & Marita Richardson  
 Hart & Debbie Cohen  
 Victor & Jacqueline Cohenca  
 Shoshana Dai  
 Steven & Vivian Dorfman  
 Rabbi Pini & Sabine Dunner  
 Georgette Dunst  
 Simon Elhiani & Rita Lewkowicz  
 Marty & Eva Feldberg  
 Adam & Debby Fenner  
 Shawney & Richard Fine  
 Harry Finkel

Karen Fisher  
 James & Debby Fogelman  
 David & Gloria Frankel  
 Jerry & Jean Friedman  
 Jason Fuchs  
 Aaron & Lillian Fuchs  
 Tuvia Ganz & Joanne Sacks  
 Larry & Judith Garshofsky  
 Jeffrey Golden & Allyson Kimmel  
 Regina Goldberger  
 Susan Graysen  
 Evan & Liz Greenspan  
 Daniel & Tanner Gromis  
 Edwin & Cecile Gromis  
 Jeff Gross & Gina Raphael  
 Chavi Hertz  
 Diana Hirt  
 Eva Hogan  
 Nora Holtz  
 Vahid Javaherian & Shirin Azizzadeh  
 Rabbi Alan & Sandy Kalinsky  
 David & Phyllis Katzin  
 Philip & Janice Kaufler

Jonathan & Faye Kellerman  
 Hillel & Ruth Kellerman  
 Mark & Amy Kestenbaum  
 David & Roberta Kimmel  
 Hillel Laks  
 Ari & Esther Lastenko  
 William Levin  
 William & Joan Lopatin  
 Vera Markowitz  
 Stuart & Fran Miller  
 Adley Morison  
 Linda Morrow  
 Raphy & Rivka Nissel  
 Barry Novack & Annie Baum  
 Michael & Ariella Novack  
 Mark & Marlene Perl  
 Rabbi Aryeh & Mushky Perlstein  
 Leo & Katie Pustilnikov  
 Howard & Judy Raykoff  
 Weston & Denise Richter  
 David & Leah Ross  
 Rosalyn Rothman  
 Simon & Susy Rubinstein  
 Franck & Evelina Ruimy

Faramarz & Sheilagh Sadeghi  
 Lee Samson  
 Stephen & Jessica Samuel  
 Joseph & Galina Samuel  
 Moshe & Helen Sassover  
 George & Irina Schaeffer  
 Arnold & Sheri Schlesinger  
 H. Stephen Schloss  
 Avrumie & Maryjo Schnitzer  
 Adam & Jesse Shaked  
 David & Michele Silver  
 Parvin Sofer  
 Norman & Virginia Solomon  
 Jaime & Marilyn Sohacheski  
 Seymour & Grace Stoll  
 Daniel & Bella Strum  
 Russel & Lisa Stuart  
 Barton & Arleen Tanenbaum  
 JJ & Wendy Wallack  
 Michael & Shari Weiner  
 Tammy Weisman  
 Jacques & Natalie Wizman  
 Michael & Tova Zaghi  
 Bob Zeller & Nadine Gerson

## THANK YOU TO OUR MISHLOACH MANOT COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Arleen Tanenbaum

Committee Members: June Brenner, Vivian Dorfman, Carly Einfeld, Cecile Gromis, Madeline Kramer and Bart Tanenbaum

## THANK YOU TO OUR MISHLOACH MANOT PACKING VOLUNTEERS

June Brenner, Vivian Dorfman, Sabine Dunner, Georgette Dunst, Karen Fisher, Darryl Kam, Fran Miller, Linda Morrow, Rabbi Aryeh Perlstein, Judy Raykoff, Galina Samuel, Maryjo Schnitzer, Arleen Tanenbaum and Bart Tanenbaum



## RETRIEVING YOUR MISHLOACH MANOT

You can pick up your Mishloach Manot bags on the following dates and times:

- Following the Megilla Reading on Saturday Evening, March 23rd at 8:00pm
- Following the Megilla Reading on Sunday, March 24th at 8:00am
- Following the second Megilla Reading on Sunday, March 24th at 10:30am



# First Night SEDER

ישיבת YINBH BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE

Monday, April 22nd, 2024

SEDER LED BY  
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I'm in! Sign me up. Can't wait to be there.



## SOLIDARITY TRIP TO ISRAEL FRIDAY JUNE 21 - WEDNESDAY JUNE 26



Following the success and profound impact of our January YINBH Israel Mission, we are delighted to unveil our forthcoming trip, centering on supporting our brothers and sisters move forward. This extraordinary opportunity will feature esteemed speakers, meetings, insightful visits and memorable experiences.

Trip **includes** accommodations at the **Inbal Hotel**, airport transfers, transportation within Israel, security, site visits, support staff & all meals.  
PARTICIPANTS WILL ARRANGE THEIR OWN TRAVEL TO ISRAEL, & TRAVEL INSURANCE.

**COST: \$3100 PER PERSON WITH DOUBLE OCCUPANCY  
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