

Tefilla Notebook

3 Nissan • Parshat Vayikra

March 24-25, 2023

Steven Dorfman, President

• **Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi**

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Dear Members and Friends,

This week marked twenty years since the start of the Iraq War, a conflict that continues to haunt the world. The war, which was launched by the United States and its allies on March 20, 2003, was sold to the public as a necessary response to the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) that were in the hands of Iraq's Saddam Hussein, an evil dictator straight out of central casting who had already tangled with the West in the Gulf War of 1991.

In the leadup to the conflict, the US administration under President George W. Bush went to great lengths to present intelligence which suggested that Iraq was developing and stockpiling WMDs, which could potentially be used against Western nations. The invasion of Iraq was supported by a coalition of countries, including the United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland, but the decision to go to war was highly controversial even then, with many people questioning the validity of the intelligence and the legitimacy of the war itself.

Two decades later, the Iraq War's illegitimacy is widely acknowledged, even by those who supported it outright. Saddam Hussein had neither chemical nor biological weapons, nor did he have the "yellowcake" uranium ore that the US administration claimed he had bought in Africa to create nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, the war's dreadful legacy is still felt today. Tens of thousands of people were killed, and the lives of countless others were destroyed by the conflict itself, or by ISIS and local Shiite terrorism, both of which were byproducts of the ill-conceived war. The political and social landscape of the Middle East changed forever, with one unforeseen outcome being the ascendancy of Iran in the region, and in particular its singular determination to obtain nuclear weapons.

The question that troubled analysts and experts in the aftermath of the war – a question that has reemerged to coincide with this anniversary – is whether President Bush and his colleagues at the highest level knowingly misled the American people and the international community in the lead-up to the war, or whether they bumbled into the war because they believed faulty intelligence and thought that regime change in Iraq was the only solution. Shockingly, the group of politicians involved in enabling the war even includes the current US president, Joe Biden, who headed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the leadup to the conflict. As early as August 2002, Scott Ritter, who served as the U.N. weapons inspector in Iraq from 1991 until 1998, asserted that Biden's hearings on Iraq were a "sham" and failed to facilitate an unbiased discussion as mandated by the Senate's constitutional responsibility to oversee executive policy.

Veteran political analyst, David Corn, is unequivocal – Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Scooter Libby, Condoleezza Rice, and Paul Wolfowitz, together with their teams of experts and support staff, were all aware that the evidence of Iraqi WMDs was a disreputable combination of bait-and-switch and smoke-and-mirrors. And yet, says Corn, despite this, Bush and his top aides eagerly embraced the faulty evaluations, oversold them to the public, and issued overwrought statements about the supposed threat from Iraq, which

leads Corn to conclude that Bush and his aides lied to the public to justify the war.

Assuming Corn's thesis is correct, the only question that remains is whether Bush et al thought they were doing the right thing, even if how they were doing it was wrong. I would like to believe that the answer is yes, they thought they were doing the right thing – because I am not willing to believe that these were evil people hellbent on going to war to ruin lives and end lives, including the lives of US servicemen and women, and that their lies were a foil for malevolent intentions. The fact is, good people do bad things, and often they do bad things for what they consider to be good reasons. This week I heard a quote from the notorious Saudi arms dealer, Adnan Khashoggi: "I have done many nonethical things, all of them for ethical reasons." Whether that was true for him is certainly debatable, but it is undoubtedly true of others.

The Jewish faith includes a system which acknowledges that humans do wrong even while thinking they are doing right. Rooted in the ancient laws of Temple offerings, this system is aimed specifically at those who have fallen into sin without realizing that what they were doing was sinful until later. "Korban Chatat" is a Hebrew term first found in Parshat Vayikra that refers to a type of offering brought in ancient times, when there was a central Jewish temple, to atone for a class of unintentional sin known as "shogeg". This term refers to an action that was done by someone who knew it to be wrong, or should have known it was wrong, but did not know that they were doing something wrong when they did it. In other words, at some level they acted unintentionally, but even so, the act was not unavoidable.

A key component of the "Korban Chatat" process is an acknowledgement of wrongdoing. Without this "vidui" the temple offering is worthless. Human nature is such that we always try to find justifications for actions that are wrong. Then, at some point, we are forced to face up to the fact that we messed up. Acknowledging that we could have done better, and that we should have done better, goes a long way towards squaring the circle. In Judaism, it is the only pathway back to God. Saying that we acted "in good faith" is simply not good enough. After all, a "shogeg" is not a total accident – which means that brushing it under the carpet only adds insult to injury.

Unfortunately, we live in a world where acknowledging wrongdoing, even unintentional wrongdoing, is not in vogue, and certainly not if there are political or reputational considerations at stake. But two decades after the Iraq War debacle began, and now that it has become crystal clear that the march to war was not merely an innocent miscalculation, but rather a miscalculation based on known falsehoods and lies – however well-intentioned that miscalculation may have been, it would be refreshing to hear some kind of acknowledgement from the main protagonists that they could have done better, and should have done better, and that what they did was wrong, period. Although, truth be told, I'm not going to hold my breath and wait for such an acknowledgement to come. Nevertheless, it needs to be said – which is why I have said it.

Wishing you Shabbat Shalom and a wonderful week ahead,
Rabbi Pini Dunner



FRIDAY, MARCH 24

6:50pm CANDLELIGHTING
6:30pm KABBALAT SHABBAT

SATURDAY, MARCH 25

8:30am GEMARA SHIUR
9:15 am SHACHARIT
6:55 pm MINCHA
7:45 pm MAARIV
7:47 pm SHABBAT ENDS

WEEKDAY DAVENING

Sun	8:00am	6:55pm
Mon-Thu	7:00am	6:55pm
Fri	7:00am	6:30pm

PASSOVER IS IN 10 DAYS

Sell your chametz at

www.yinbh.org/chametz

Sisterhood Corner

April

First Night Seder

Wednesday, April 5th 7:30 pm

Seder led by Rabbi Pini Dunner

Come experience the exodus from Egypt while enjoying a gourmet festive meal!

Reserve your spot at www.yinbh.org/seder

RESCHEDULED

YINBH Book Group read!

We will be reading

The Periodic Table by Primo Levi

Chosen by The Royal Institution of Great Britain as the best science book ever written.

Thursday, April 20th at 7:30 pm

Private home address will be provided upon RSVP

RSVP at yinbh.org/bookgroup

Get ready for an insightful discussion!

Chodesh Tov and Shabbat Shalom,

Cecile & Ruthie

Sisterhood Co-Presidents

YAHRTZEITS



Irving Silberspitz

Yitzchak ben Avraham Aba z"l

Father of

Cecile Gromis

Yahrzeit - 5 Nissan

Johanna Klein

Yona bat Yaakov Mordechai a"h

Mother of

Debbie Cohen

Yahrzeit - 6 Nissan

Abraham J Kaufler

Avraham Yosef ben Chaim z"l

Father of

Phillip Kaufler

Yahrzeit - 7 Nissan



If you would like to join the Mincha/Maariv WhatsApp Group, please send a message to the Rabbi on WhatsApp at 310-499-3407

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Rita Lewkowicz

Spencer Fogelman

David Kimmel

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

STEVEN & VIVIAN DORFMAN KEILIM MIKVAH



The Keilim Mikvah is now 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 travelling Keilim. You can give a donation directly to the keilim mikvah by visiting beverlyhillssynagogue.org/keilim

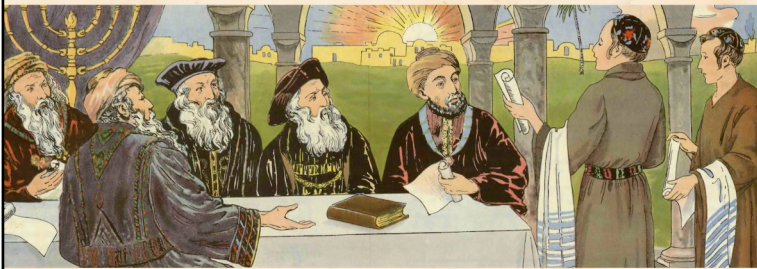


MAOT CHITIM

Pesach is meant to be a joyous yomtov, but unfortunately it becomes a terrible financial burden for families who are unable to provide for themselves. And because of the current global inflation situation, this year's burden has exploded exponentially, and the demand for assistance has skyrocketed. Your help and generosity will make all the difference. Rabbi Dunner will be accepting donations for Maot Chitim that will go directly towards helping those in need. Please donate generously. You can do so online at yinbh.org/donate and select "Maot Chitim" from the donation dropdown or send a check made payable to "YINBH" and please make sure to write "Maot chitim" on the memo. Thank you for your kindness and generosity.



We have two gorgeous displays of marble yahrzeit plaques on the back walls of our sanctuary. This is a beautiful way of memorializing the names of departed loved ones. Yahrzeit plaques cost \$1,800. To order a plaque or for more information contact Madeline Kramer at mkramer@yinbh.org



SHABBAT HAGADOL DRASHA

All Night Long

THE INSIDE STORY OF JEWISH
HISTORY'S MOST FAMOUS SEDER

with **Rabbi Pini Dunner**

The Haggadah recalls the story of five Talmudic sages who spent the entire night regaling each other with details of the Exodus story, so much so that their students had to remind them it was morning, and that they had to say Shema! What is the backstory to this remarkable Seder? What lesson is the Haggadah trying to teach us by including it? And what have the commentaries over the ages had to say about this marathon historical Pesach experience? Rabbi Dunner will regale you with insights and nuggets that illuminate and unpack this curious episode as never before.

SHABBOS, APRIL 1ST, 2023 6:15PM

**THE RABBI WILL RECORD THE DRASHA AFTER SHABBOS
AND THE LINK WILL BE SENT OUT ON SUNDAY**

Passover 2023

April 5th- 13th, 2023



We have a limited quantity of hand-baked shmurah matzah available to our members. We will be selling them for \$38/1lb box. First come, first served.

To order, visit www.yinbh.org/shmura



Chametz Sale Form is available to download at yinbh.org/chametz. Copies of the Chametz Sale Form are available in at the Synagogue. Please fill it in, scan it, and email it to office@yinbh.org by Tuesday, April 4th at 10am.



Passover Seder on the first night of Passover - Wednesday, April 5th. Gourmet Glatt Kosher, Private Chef. See Flyer and RSVP at yinbh.org/seder



The OU Guide to Passover is available for Pickup in the lobby. You can also find the guide online at www.oukosher.org/passover



Join the Pesach 2023 WhatsApp Group. Rabbi Dunner will be answering any questions you have and posting Pesach related updates. To join goto www.yinbh.org/whatsapp

PASSOVER SCHEDULE 5783/2023

Tuesday, April 4th

7:00am Shacharit
10:00am Deadline for selling chometz
7:05pm Mincha/Maariv
7:31 pm **BEDIKAT CHAMETZ**

EREV PESACH/TAANIT BECHORIM

Wednesday, April 5th

7:00am Shacharit
7:30am Siyum for Firstborns
**SIYUM SPONSORED BY RABBI PINI & SABINE
DUNNER IN MEMORY OF RABBI J. H. DUNNER Z"l**

10:49am Latest time for eating chometz
11:53am Latest time for burning chometz
6:59pm Candle Lighting**
7:10pm Mincha/Kabbalat Yom Tov/Maariv
7:30pm YINBH SEDER LED BY RABBI PINI DUNNER
7:55pm Earliest time for Kiddush

EAT AFIKOMAN BEFORE 12:55AM

**Brachot: *Le'hadlik Ner Shel YomTov* and *Shehecheyanu*

**A 24hr candle should also be lit before 6:59pm

**Do "Eruv Tavshilin" BEFORE CANDLELIGHTING so that you can eat food on Shabbat that was prepared on Yomtov.

FIRST DAY OF YOMTOV

Thursday, April 6th

NO GEMARA SHIUR

9:00am Shacharit
11:00am Mussaf with *Tefillat Tal*
7:10pm Mincha
7:25pm Maariv/Sefirat Ha'omer
7:56pm Candlelighting**
7:56pm Earliest time for Kiddush

EAT AFIKOMAN BEFORE 12:55AM

**Light should be taken from an existing flame

**Brachot: *Le'hadlik Ner Shel YomTov* and *Shehecheyanu*

SECOND DAY OF YOMTOV

Friday, April 7th

8:15am Rabbi's Gemara Shiur
9:00am Shacharit
6:30pm Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat
CANDLELIGHTING NO LATER THAN 7:01PM

See Sperate Schedule Card for Chol Hamoed and Last Days of Passover.

First Night SEDER

Wednesday, April 5th 2023

Gourmet glatt kosher
International wine
selection

**SEDER LED BY
RABBI
PINI
DUNNER**

**EARLY BIRD
BEFORE MARCH 20TH
ADULT \$195 • CHILD \$110**

AFTER MARCH 20TH - ADULT \$210 • CHILD \$125

www.yinbh.org/seder

ישיבת ינב"ה
YINBH
BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE

