

Tefilla Notebook

1 Iyyar • Tazria-Mezorah • Rosh Chodesh

April 21-22, 2023

Steven Dorfman, President

Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi

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Dear Members and Friends,

Benjamin Franklin declared that "half the truth is often a great lie." Mark Twain put it slightly differently: "A half-truth is the most cowardly of lies." And this, from Tennyson: "The lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies." Essentially, they were all saying the same thing; the lies that cause the most harm are the half-truths, which

ultimately cause far greater damage than outright lies.

A 2022 study issued by four academics at the University of Cincinnati – "The Half-Truth Effect and Its Implications for Sustainability" – identified what the authors referred to as the "half-truth effect". Based on two carefully calibrated survey-based experiments, the study showed that people tend to believe a false claim more when it is preceded by a true claim, even if the claims are unrelated. On the other hand, when a false claim is presented before a true claim, it reduces belief in the entire statement.

Politicians are particularly bad when it comes to half-truths, and party affiliation is not a relevant factor – because they all do it. Two months ago, President Biden told an audience in Philadelphia that he had "created more new jobs in two years than any president did in their entire term." But although it's true that President Biden has recorded notable job gains in his presidential term so far, surpassing those of previous postwar presidents, the fact is that he took office just as the economy was recovering from a profound recession, which gave the job market a significant tailwind. So, a half-truth.

Meanwhile, at the opposite end of the political spectrum, last week former vice president Mike Pence told an audience in Indianapolis that "liberals" emptied mental health hospitals in the 1960s. He failed to mention that they didn't act alone. Many fiscal conservatives, including several Republicans, were instrumental in shaping the key legislation that resulted in shutting down mental hospitals. Ronald Reagan, who served as both California's governor and later as president, was particularly prominent; he signed landmark bills that left a significant impact. Another half-truth.

The Torah portions of Tazria and Metzora delve into an extinct condition known as "tzara'at", which was characterized by discoloration of the skin, on clothes, or on the walls of a person's home. The consequence of a positive diagnosis was quarantine outside community boundaries for someone with the skin discoloration tzara'at, or the destruction of clothes or a home that had been infected.

While not explicitly stated in the Torah, the Talmudic sages reveal that tzara'at was the consequence of wrongdoing on the part of the afflicted person. The Talmud (Arachin 16a), drawing on various biblical sources, suggests different potential causes for tzara'at, with speaking ill of others behind their backs being the best-known cause. The divergence of opinions regarding the cause of tzara'at suggests that by the time the sages of the Talmud were writing about it, the condition had either disappeared or become exceedingly rare, leading the sages to speculate on its causes. But the persistence of this idea that gossip and tittle-tattle were the

main cause of tzara'at is intriguing, especially as the Talmud mentions six other potential causes.

The enigmatic nature of tzara'at leaves us grappling with uncertainties as we attempt to understand exactly what we are meant to learn from it. Why would God choose to punish individuals for a seemingly minor transgression such as engaging in gossip? The notion of quarantine and public humiliation is also puzzling. Why would isolation be the remedy? Why is the destruction of clothes and a person's home the only solution?

The answer relates to the issue of half-truths vs. whole truths. I vividly recall a classroom discussion during my childhood, and although I can't remember the exact topic, I do recollect our teacher posing the question, "What is your parents' greatest source of pleasure?" My hand shot up. Smiling, I confidently responded, "Me, of course!" But he had a follow up question: "What's your parents' greatest source of pain?" I paused, briefly, and then I smiled again. "Me, of course!" I replied. And I wasn't lying – although, to be fair, my siblings probably shared this distinction with me. Being the source of pleasure and pain was the whole truth; had I said that I was the source of just one or the other it would have been a half-truth that distorted the picture completely.

Many aspects of our lives are wonderful, but we are also all plagued by aspects that are distressing and disturbing. Curiously, if we analyze our lives and are brutally honest with ourselves, we might discover that it is often the same thing which causes joy that also causes us distress. Presented one way they are irredeemably negative, but presented in another they can be upliftingly positive. Our personal reality is complex, and life is complicated.

Modern psychology has come to the conclusion that depressed people aren't lying when they say that there are things in their lives which are bad – it's just that they fail to appreciate that there is good in their lives as well. And often, the good is in the very same aspects of their lives which they cast in the most negative light.

Society descends into dysfunction when one "truth" is chosen over another without considering the coexistence of multiple truths. This idea is exemplified by tzara'at and its treatment. Tzara'at was an affliction that befell those who refused to acknowledge that good and bad can coexist. They spoke ill of others, perhaps sharing a half-truth about them that cast their target in an entirely negative light without allowing the listener to consider the broader context.

Often, the greatest lie is the truth seen through a narrow lens. The gravest evil is the undermining of complex reality by cherry-picking truths to support or perpetuate a biased viewpoint. A person with tzara'at needs to be removed from society, so that they cannot destroy it, and the tzara'at itself must be destroyed, as a symbol of the destruction created by those who peddle half-truths.

The message of tzara'at is clear: half-truths wreak havoc. They erode the fabric of society and those who perpetuate them must never be tolerated, or society will fall apart.

Wishing you Shabbat Shalom and a wonderful week ahead,

Rabbi Pini Dunner

FRIDAY, APRIL 21		SATURDAY, APRIL 22	
	7:11pm CANDLELIGHTING	8:15 am GEMARA SHIUR	
	6:30pm KABBALAT SHABBAT	9:00 am SHACHARIT	
		6:50 pm PIRKEI AVOT SHIUR	
		7:15 pm MINCHA	
		8:05 pm MAARIV	
		8:10pm SHABBAT ENDS	

WEEKDAY DAVENING		
Sun	8:00am	7:15pm
Mon-Thu	7:00am	7:15pm
Fri	7:00am	6:30pm

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
Vladimir Ari Lastenko & Esther Krastova and their children
Alexander & Sebastian Levi

Sisterhood Corner

April / May

Happy Yom Ha'atzmaut!

**Tekes Maavar, Tefillah Chagigit
and Chagigah**

**For Yom Hazikaron and Yom
Ha'atzmaut**

Presented by Bnei Akiva of Los
Angeles

Tuesday, April 25th at 6:30 pm

More details at

www.bneiakivala.org/yh5783

Reserve Your Seat Now!

YINBH Annual Gala Banquet

Sunday, May 21st at 5:30 pm

Jim Henson Studio

RSVP at www.bhsbanquet.com

Chodesh Tov and Shabbat Shalom,

Cecile & Ruthie

Sisterhood Co-Presidents

YAHRTZEITS



Penina Gaba

Penina bat Yitzchok a"h

Mother of

Ruth Gaba

Yahrzeit - 2 Iyyar

Alvin Doppelt

Yitzchak ben Shmuel z"l

Father of

Julie Boyer

Yahrzeit - 3 Iyyar

Enid West

Shoshana bat Yosef a"h

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Yahrzeit - 4 Iyyar

Samuel Garshofsky

Shmuel ben Chaim Eliezer z"l

Father of

Larry Garshofsky

Yahrzeit - 6 Iyyar

Nisen Ganz

Nisen ben Sholom z"l

Father of

Tuvia Ganz

Yahrzeit - 7 Iyyar

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Jaime Sohacheski

George Schaeffer

Andrea Feldberg

Marian Merritt

Sepideh Eliahoo

Richard Shamos

Uri Dunner

Lisa Korbato

Natalie Sudar

Molly Boyer

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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 tovelling Keilim. You can give a donation directly to the keilim mikvah by visiting beverlyhillssynagogue.org/keilim

Yom Haatzmaut Breakfast

WEDNESDAY

APRIL 26TH

SHACHARIT BEGINS AT 7AM

INCLUDING HALLEL

BREAKFAST TO FOLLOW



GUEST SPEAKER

Shabbat 29th April 2023

Rabbi Aryeh Perlstein

Rabbi Perlstein will address the community at 11:00am

Born in Chicago, Rabbi Aryeh Perlstein was raised in a family of distinguished rabbis and community leaders. After completing his rabbinic internship in Cape Town, South Africa, he received semicha from Rabbi Yitzchak Yehuda Yerushlinsky of Central Chabad Beth Din in Israel. He continued his studies at Kollel Tzemach Tzedek in Jerusalem and was fortunate enough to be mentored by Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz OB"AM.

In October 2015, together with his Rebbetzin, Mushky, he founded Chabad of Echo Park and 'Anjewlino,' a community for young Jewish creatives and professionals in Northeast LA. Rabbi Perlstein is passionate about infusing contemporary life with Jewish teachings and inspiring a proud Jewish identity. He has lectured and officiated weddings in Israel, Europe, Canada and throughout the United States.

Rabbi Perlstein resides in Echo Park with Rebbetzin Mushky and their three children, where Mushky's modern approach to traditional Jewish cuisine has gained admiration throughout the Jewish community and social media.

Rabbi Perlstein will also speak during Seudah Shlishit

BREAKFAST SHIUR

Sunday 30th April, 2023
Shacharit 8am
Bagels & Lox at approx 8:30am
Shiur 9am



BROTHERS CRYING FROM THE GROUND: BIBLICAL ORIGINS OF OUR FRACTURED SOCIETY

**JUDY
KLITSNER**

Judy Klitsner is a senior lecturer in Bible at Pardes Institute, where she has empowered a generation of students to seek meaning and relevance in the text through a skills-based method of learning. Judy has taught Bible to Christian and Muslim religious leaders and she has served as a regular visiting lecturer at the London School of Jewish Studies. Judy is the author of the acclaimed book Subversive Sequels in the Bible: How Biblical Stories Mine and Undermine Each Other, which received a National Jewish book award.

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בס"ד

You're invited to a kiddush luncheon to
celebrate the engagement of

MEIR and RONIA

*Shabbat
22 April*

SHACHARIT STARTS AT 9AM AND WILL BE
FOLLOWED BY KIDDUSH LUNCHEON AT 12PM

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TEFILLAH CHAGIGIT,
and CHAGIGAH

for
*Yom Hazikaron and
Yom Ha'atzmaut*

TUESDAY, APRIL 25TH

YULA BOYS DIVISION - NAGEL FAMILY CAMPUS

DOORS OPEN - 6:00 PM
MINCHA IN BEIT MIDRASH - 6:15 PM
TEKES MAAVAR BEGINS - 6:30 PM

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and CHAGIGAH LED BY

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Sunday, May 21st, 2023

FEATURING THE FAB FOUR
AT JIM HENSON STUDIOS
1416 N La Brea Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90028

5:30pm
Cocktails

6:30pm
Dinner

8:00pm
Concert

RSVP at WWW.BHSBANQUET.COM