

Tefilla Notebook

29 Iyyar • Bamidbar

Steven Dorfman, President

Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi

May 19-20, 2023

www.yinbh.org

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Dear Members and Friends,

Wallace Stanley Sayre (1905–1972) was an esteemed American political scientist, who left an indelible mark as a distinguished professor at Columbia University. He was also renowned for his expertise in New York City politics. But truthfully, he is best remembered as the originator of the eponymous Sayres Law – “Academic politics is the most vicious and bitter form of politics, precisely because the stakes are so low.”

The English writer and savant, Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) – remembered for having compiled the first comprehensive English dictionary, and also for the account of his life penned by his faithful companion James Boswell (1740-1795) – wrote in a similar vein about controversies between scholars: “Whether it be that small things make mean men proud, and vanity catches small occasions; or that all contrariety of opinion, even in those that can defend it no longer, makes proud men angry; there is often found in commentaries a spontaneous strain of invective and contempt, more eager and venomous than is vented by the most furious controvertist in politics against those whom he is hired to defame.”

And this phenomenon is not some fantasy dreamed up by troublemakers looking to poke fun at intellectuals. On the contrary – there have been countless examples of long-term associations and even friendships being dissolved as a result of disagreements over topics that very few people understand, or care about. One famous instance is the bitter polemic between Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), the renowned physicist and mathematician, and his collaborator, scientist Robert Hooke (1635-1703), over the invention of calculus and the nature of light. The feud began after Hooke criticized Newton’s theory of light and his claims about the inverse square law of gravitation, and soon turned very personal, with Newton referring to Hooke as a “contemptible fellow” in a letter to the Royal Society. The dispute eventually escalated to the point where Newton removed any mention of Hooke from subsequent editions of his works.

Another example of gratuitous intellectual squabbling was the notorious public spat between the two twentieth-century science giants, Albert Einstein (1879-1955) and German physicist and Nobel laureate Philipp Lenard (1862-1947). Lenard became a fierce proponent of what he termed “Aryan physics”, and he referred to Einstein’s theory of relativity as “Jewish physics” – by which he meant that it lacked scientific merit. Ultimately, the dispute had nothing whatsoever to do with science; it was merely an expression of Lennard’s bigoted views, most probably the result of his deeply rooted resentment at Einstein’s meteoric ascendancy within the scientific world and beyond.

One might have thought that these kinds of disputes between advanced intellectuals exist only in an arena devoid of God. But nothing could be further from the truth. I have previously written regarding the dispute between two rabbinic giants of the eighteenth century, R. Yaakov Emden (1797-1776) and his bête-noir, R. Yonason Eibeschutz (1690-1764), whom R. Emden accused of heresy and scandalous behavior. Both rabbis were devout and learned, and their rabbinic writings continue to be considered as sources of faith inspiration to this day. And yet, the dispute between them ravaged Jewish communities in Europe for years, even after they died.

The most egregious example of a rabbinic row in Jewish history is the unbridled hostility displayed towards Maimonides by a number of his colleagues, both during and after his lifetime, in what became known as the Maimonidean Controversy. One of his key critics was R. Solomon ben

Abraham of Montpellier (“Rashba”; d.1315), a French rabbinic leader and scholar, who took exception to Maimonides’ introduction of philosophy into mainstream Jewish thought, including his halakhic works. Shockingly, he denounced Maimonides’ books to the Dominicans, claiming that they contained dangerous heresies for both Christianity and Judaism. The surprised monks happily agreed with him, and held public ceremonies where they burned Maimonides’ books – in Montpellier in 1234, and in Paris in 1242. No one doubts the faith integrity of either Maimonides or Rashba, and their works are equally revered by Jewish scholars – and yet, Maimonides did provoke a firestorm of controversy, and Rashba was an eager and proactive participant.

Even believing in God and being true to one’s faith cannot protect a person from descending into petty disputes and destructive arguments. In fact, it can even seem as if the more faithful one is to God, the more prone one is to fall into a trap of bitter quarrels and pointless hatred. The stakes couldn’t possibly be smaller, and yet the repercussions are often so devastating to all those involved, and to many others who aren’t. And if you’re thinking that this phenomenon is a representation of our own contemporary faith weakness, the Midrash informs us that even the great generation that accepted the Torah at Mount Sinai was potentially vulnerable to petty squabbles.

According to the Midrash, during the giving of the Torah, the Israelites witnessed angels descending in a precise formation, organized in defined groups, and identified with flags. Inspired by this sight, the Israelites desired a similar arrangement for themselves, as described in Parshat Bamidbar. But Moses was concerned that the arrangement wouldn’t work, and told God that it would inevitably result in one or another of the tribes getting offended at where they had been placed. God reassured Moses, telling him that the tribes already knew their designated positions; when Jacob’s coffin was carried out of Egypt, each of his sons stood around the coffin in a particular formation – and their placement at Jacob’s funeral was the precedent that indicated their future arrangement in the wilderness.

The Mussar pioneers of the nineteenth century see this Midrashic narrative as an illustration of the paradoxical nature of human beings. The Israelites aspired to be like angels, but Moses understood that their tendency to argue and bicker would ultimately undermine their good intentions. The Midrash highlights the dualism within us – although we are capable of reaching great heights, we are also plagued by base desires and temptations. Despite our intellectual achievements and lofty ambitions, we are all still bound to our human nature – and, in fact, the higher we climb, and the more lofty we become, the more vulnerable we are to rowing and fighting.

Although, the conclusion of the Midrash presents us with an interesting dilemma. Why should the arrangement of the tribes at Jacob’s funeral, which was a unique event, have meant that all would be okay in the wilderness hundreds of years later? After all, the funeral was a unique event, and it is a stretch to suggest that the arrangement at Jacob’s funeral would naturally occur in the future. The simplest answer, and the one that can give us all hope, is that once a precedent has been set, even if it happens under extraordinary circumstances, that precedent is hard to break. The precedent becomes the norm. Which means that if we want to avoid bickering over nonsense, we all need to create patterns of behavior that protect us when something happens which might lead to a fight. Because, even when the stakes are low, the price of fighting is always unbearable.

Wishing you Shabbat Shalom, Chodesh Tov, and a great week ahead,
Rabbi Pini Dunner

FRIDAY, MAY 19	SATURDAY, MAY 20
7:33 pm CANDLELIGHTING	8:30 am GEMARA SHIUR
6:30 pm KABBALAT SHABBAT	9:15 am SHACHARIT
	7:15 pm PIRKEI AVOT SHIUR
	7:40 pm MINCHA
	8:30 pm MAARIV
	8:35 pm SHABBAT ENDS

WEEKDAY DAVENING		
Sun	8:00am	7:40pm
Mon-Wed	7:00am	7:40pm
Rosh Chodesh Sivan is on Sunday		
See Page 3 for Shavuot Schedule		

UPCOMING EVENTS
YINBH Gala - Sun, May 21st
Shavuot Dinner and Learning - Thurs, May 25th
Melanie Phillips Guest Speaker- Sat, June 10th
Grad Shabbat - Sat, June 24th

Sisterhood Corner

We are so excited to share that **Maryjo Schnitzer** will join **Gina Raphael** as co-President of the YINBH Sisterhood. Maryjo has been at the forefront of welcoming new members and building our community at YINBH. With her warm personality and dedication to the shul, Maryjo in collaboration with Gina will continue the legacy of Sisterhood created by **Cecile Gromis** and **Ruthie Kellerman**. Together, they will bring their own unique flair and partnership to YINBH.

We hope each of you can join us for Shavout dinner & learning on May 24th. The invitation for the event is included in the flyer on page 4.

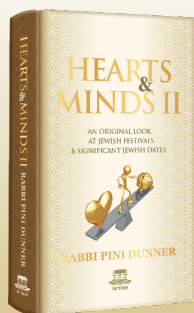
On June 10th, YINBH will welcome **Melanie Phillips** as we celebrate a Shabbos of Womens' leadership, welcoming a voice of Modern Orthodoxy as we also recognize women leaders at home.

We would like to recognize **Cecile Gromis** & **Ruthie Kellerman**, outgoing Presidents of the Sisterhood.

A special thank you to **June Brenner**, **Judith Garshofsky**, **Nadine Gerson**, **Vera Markowitz**, **Rosalyn Rothman**, **Galina Samuel**, **Joanne Sacks**, **Irina Schaeffer**, and **Arleen Tanenbaum** for their past years' and future commitment to the Sisterhood.

We welcome everyone to join and support us in all of our upcoming events!

COMING SOON



Hearts & Minds II

An Original Look at
Jewish Festivals &
Significant Jewish
Dates

By Rabbi Pini Dunner

YAHRTZEITS



Mel Gross

Moshe z"l

Father of

Jeffrey Gross

Yahrtzeit - 29 Iyyar

Mary Friedman

Mother of

Karen Fisher

Yahrtzeit - 4 Sivan

Yosef Goldberger

Yosef ben Yishayahu z"l

Father of

Ernie Goldberger

Yahrtzeit - 6 Sivan

Adina Goldberger

Adina bat Asher a"h

Mother of

Ernie Goldberger

Yahrtzeit - 6 Sivan

Shmuel Goldberger

Shmuel ben Yosef z"l

Brother of

Ernie Goldberger

Yahrtzeit - 6 Sivan

Baruch Goldberger

Baruch ben Yosef z"l

Brother of

Ernie Goldberger

Yahrtzeit - 6 Sivan

Jozef Goldberger

Jozef ben Yosef z"l

Brother of

Ernie Goldberger

Yahrtzeit - 6 Sivan

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Marita Richardson

Elizabeth Richter

Abigail Kestenbaum

Debby Fogelman

Kateryna Lastenko

Justin Silver

Mical Frankel

Sydney Gross

Maiah Cohenca

Enzo Teboul

Happy Anniversary

*James & Debby
Fogelman*

Mazal Tov

Mazal Tov to **Mark & Janey Herskovitz** on the birth of a grandson born to **Jonathan (Yoni) and Liora (Fink) Herskovitz** of Omaha Nebraska.

The brit milah was 2 weeks ago and the baby was named **Jonah Gabriel, Yonah Gavriel**, after our beloved member **Jonas Herskovitz z"l**, the baby's Great Grandfather. May *Jonas' memory live on in his great-grandson*

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

ANNUAL BANQUET

Sunday, May 21st, 2023

THANK YOU TO
EVERYONE WHO
CONTRIBUTED AND WILL
BE JOINING US AT THIS
YEAR'S GALA! WE LOOK
FORWARD TO SEEING
YOU ON SUNDAY!

HENSON STUDIOS
1416 N La Brea Ave,
Los Angeles, CA 90028

5:30pm

HAVE A GRADUATE?

MEMBERS - If you have a child or grandchild who is graduating this year, please send their information to office@yinhb.org. Please include a photo, where they are graduating from, and the degree they are receiving.

We will be listing all the graduates in the June 22nd Tefilla Notebook.

YINBH SISTERHOOD PRESENTS....

GUEST SPEAKER

SHABBAT OF WOMENS' LEADERSHIP ♦ JUNE 10TH, 2023

YINBH is pleased to welcome **Melanie Phillips** as we celebrate a Shabbat of Womens' leadership. We will be welcoming a voice of Modern Orthodoxy as we also recognize women leaders at home.

We would like to recognize **Cecile Gromis & Ruthie Kellerman**, outgoing Presidents of the Sisterhood.

A special thank you to **June Brenner, Judith Garshofsky, Nadine Gerson, Vera Markowitz, Rosalyn Rothman, Galina Samuel, Joanne Sacks, Irina Schaeffer, and Arleen Tanenbaum** for their past years' and future commitment to the Sisterhood. We welcome everyone to join and support us in all of our upcoming events!

Melanie Phillips is a British journalist, broadcaster and author who has championed traditional values in the culture war for more than three decades. She writes a weekly column in The Times of London and Jewish News Syndicate, and regularly broadcasts on the BBC. Her first novel, *The Legacy*, which deals with conflicted Jewish identity, antisemitism and the power of history, was published in 2018 along with her personal and political memoir, *Guardian Angel*. You can follow Melanie's work at her website, melaniephillips.substack.com



MELANIE
PHILLIPS

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LIVE VIRTUAL YIZKOR SERVICE

יזכור



Thursday May 25, 2023
11:00am PST via zoom

Zoom Code: 310 276 7650
Password: yinhb

SHAVUOT SCHEDULE

Thursday, May 25 - Sivan 5 - Erev Shavuot

7:00am Shacharit

11:00am Virtual Yizkor Service

7:30pm Mincha

7:37pm Candle Lighting

7:40pm Maariv

8:00pm Shavuot Dinner Followed by Learnathon

See Leil Shavuot Class Topics and Schedule on Flyer on page 4

Friday, May 26 - Sivan 6 - Shavuot - 1st Day

No Gemara Shiur

9:00am Shacharit

6:15pm Shiur by Chabad Yeshivah Boys

7:00pm Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat

7:38pm Candle Lighting

Saturday, May 27 - Sivan 7 - Shavuot - 2nd Day

8:15am Gemara Shiur

9:00am Shacharit

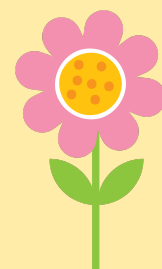
10:45am (Approx) Yizkor

7:45pm Mincha

8:05pm Seudah Shlishit

8:35pm Maariv

8:39pm Havdalah



SHAVUOT DINNER

And Learnathon

THURSDAY, MAY 25TH 2023

*Dinner Catered by
Trattoria Natalie*

7:30pm



MINCHA

7:37pm



CANDLE LIGHTING

7:40pm



MAARIV

8:00pm



DINNER

8:45-

9:30pm



CLASS 1

9:30-

9:45pm



DESSERT BREAK

9:45-

10:30pm



CLASS 2

10:30-

10:45pm



DESSERT BREAK

10:45 -

11:30pm



CLASS 3

11:30-

11:45pm



ICE CREAM WRAP UP

*Featuring
Cheesecakes from
Magnolia Bakery*



THREE CLASSES BY RABBI PINI DUNNER

MEGILLAT RUTH

MORE THAN JUST A STORY

1

SECRETS OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

THE MYSTERY IS SOLVED

2

DNA IDENTITY

CAN SCIENCE PROVE I'M JEWISH?

3

9261 Alden Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

YINBH
SISTERHOOD

\$80 FOR ADULTS, \$60 FOR CHILDREN

www.yinbh.org/Shavuot