

Thank you to **Liz, Evan** and **Julia Greenspan** for sponsoring this weeks Tefilla Notebook in memory of Evan's mother, **Syliva Greenspan, Sara bat Dov Ber a"h**, whose yahrtzeit is on 28 Tishrei

Tefilla Notebook

29 Tishrei • Bereshit • Birkat Hachodesh

October 16-17, 2020

Steven Dorfman, President

Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi

Nati Bar-Am, Chazan

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY OCTOBER 16TH

5:59pm CANDLELIGHTING

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH

7:01pm SHABBAT ENDS

WEEKDAY DAVENING TIMES

Sunday 8:00am & 6:05pm

Monday - Friday 7:00am & 6:05pm

Services are also on zoom
<https://zoom.us/j/226829899>



Atah Horeisa
 Steve Dorfman
Chatan Torah
 Rabbi Pini Dunner
Chatan Bereshit
 Ernie Goldberger
Chatan Kol Hane'arim
 Lee Samson

Those who are going to be attending our in-person minyanim **must pre-register**. Services are open to MEMBERS ONLY at this time. Space is limited. **ALL services are being held at a private residence tennis court in Beverly Hills.**

If you have observed a yahrtzeit, or had a Birthday or Anniversary that was not listed in the Tefilla Notebook, please let us know so we can update our records. Email office@yinh.org

Dearest Members and Friends,

Long ago—far longer than I am willing to admit—when I was a young rabbi teaching Bar Mitzvah boys, the mother of one of my star students informed me that the Bar Mitzvah dinner for her son was not going to be a kosher affair.

She explained that the dinner simply had to take place at a five-star hotel, and none of the fancy London hotels had in-house kosher catering. It was clear that she did not want to deal with kosher caterers—there were a number of them who had concessions at a range of West End hotels. As a result of this aversion, she was willing to abandon having kosher food for her son's Jewish coming-of-age celebration.

Serendipitously, I had just become involved with introducing in-house kosher catering at the newly reopened Langham Hilton Hotel, a luxury venue very close to London's iconic Regents Park. I suggested to the mother that at the very least, we should make an effort for the Bar Mitzvah function to be kosher, and assured her that I would arrange for a bells-and-whistles food tasting with Langham's head chef and banqueting manager. Reluctantly, she agreed.

A week later, we sat around a table at the Langham's Palm Court. Quite randomly, my student's mother had decided to bring her elderly father to the tasting. He was a very dignified looking man, well dressed and courteous, and he spoke with just a hint of a German accent.

Curious to find out more, I struck up a conversation with him. He told me he was born into a very religious family but had abandoned his Orthodox roots in his youth, and he later became very successful in business. Despite his personal journey, he was delighted that his grandson was going to have a proper Bar Mitzvah and that the celebratory dinner would be kosher. Just to make sure it would indeed be kosher, he had decided to attend the Langham tasting to see to it that his daughter didn't change her mind.

After preliminary introductions, the head chef summarily snapped his fingers, and out of nowhere, six immaculate waiters appeared in full white-jacketed splendor, simultaneously serving us with a range of starters for us to choose from. To me, it seemed like a dazzling display, but the Bar Mitzvah boy's grandfather looked at the various choices and grimaced. "Is that it?" The head chef blanched and then went red in the face. He looked ready to explode. The banqueting manager — a charming man with a great Orthodox pedigree of his own — smiled warmly at the grandfather. "Why, is there something wrong?"

The grandfather shook his head and sighed. He put a hand on the banqueting manager's arm. "My dear man," he said, "I want to teach you an important lesson about choice and choices, and hopefully, you will remember this lesson for the rest of your life."

And although I'm not sure the banqueting manager remembers what the old man told us, I certainly do, and it continues to resonate with me to this day. "Take a look at these starters you brought in for us to try today," he began, "smoked salmon parcels with salmon mousse filling, poached salmon salad, and salmon en croûte."

He turned to me. "Do you notice," he said, "that they all share something in common? Yes, that's right — they are all salmon. The hotel kitchen clearly wants to sell us salmon today, so that whatever choice we make, we still end up with the same result. Obviously, that's what is good for them, but actually, if you think about it, there is no choice in it for us."

He turned back to the banqueting manager. "How about you offer us trout, or halibut, or dover sole, or seabass?" he asked. "Surely, with a world-class chef, such as the one joining us here, you can come up with a real and meaningful range of choices for us to choose from — especially if you know that we are kosher clients willing to go the extra mile?" By now, both the chef and banqueting manager were beaming from ear to ear, as the wisdom of the old man sank in. Sure, salmon is in plentiful supply and very popular, but they needed to expand their horizons beyond the obvious and include the obscure, so that when a potential client made a choice — even if it turned out to be salmon — the client would be fully satisfied that their pick was meaningful and significant. One of the great mysteries of Jewish tradition is what might have happened had Adam and Eve not eaten from the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 3). It almost appears as if evil came into existence only as a result of this terrible primordial blunder by the ancestors of humanity.

But there is no real mystery here, and the change resulting from that sin was actually one of complexity rather than any material difference. The Garden of Eden would not have been perfect had there not been a choice to opt out of that idealized world — a choice that was concentrated in one very specific option, namely, eating from the forbidden tree. And this choice was real, for as we see from the narrative in Genesis, it had real consequences. Meaning in life results from meaningful choices. It is only the fact that we can make a wrong choice that gives value to making the right ones. If life was utterly uniform and two-dimensional, not only would it be boring (even if it was an utter paradise), it would also be devoid of any meaning.

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As it turned out, oversimplifying choice proved overwhelming for Adam and Eve, which is why we were ultimately given a proliferation of mitzvot, as exemplified in the statement of Rabb Hananiah ben Akashia (Makkot 3:16): "God wanted to give Israel superlative merit, so He gave them a vast Torah and many commandments."

In other words, the more opportunities we have to get things wrong — and the more real choices we have — the greater opportunity we have to get things right and give meaning to our lives.

The Bar Mitzvah dinner for my star student took place at the Langham Hilton after all, and we started the sumptuous five-course feast with poached salmon salad. As we ate it, I looked across at the boy's grandfather, and he looked at me. He winked, and I smiled. We both knew that this starter was so important. It represented choice, and as long as there are choices, everything we do has an impact — even something as simple as eating poached salmon salad.

Praying for your safety and health, Shabbat Shalom & Chag Sameach. Rabbi Pini Dunner



Sisterhood Corner

October

Get ready to enjoy the night

Sisterhood's inaugural
trivia night

Coming Soon to your screen
at home

Stay tuned & study up!

Don't Forget

Treasures from The

Rabbi's Library

New series starts!

Sunday, October 18th, 2020

At 11:00am

Email office@yinbh.org

For the Zoom link

Shabbat Shalom,

Cecile & Ruthie

Sisterhood Co-Presidents

YAHRTZEITS

Linda Komorsky Liker

Chanah bat Gittel a"h

Mother of

Sherri Fogelman

Yahrtzeit— 2 Cheshvan

Harriet Schnitzer

Dorfman

Esther bat Yosef a"h

Sister of

Avrumie Schnitzer

Yahrtzeit— 3 Cheshvan

Pamela Feldberg

Perl bat Itumar a"h

Sister of

Marty Feldberg

Yahrtzeit— 3 Cheshvan

Helen Schnitzer

Chaya bat Avraham a"h

Mother of

Avrumie Schnitzer

Yahrtzeit— 3 Cheshvan



Carl Levin

Hillel Laks

Jasmine Azouz

Jason Bayer

Lee Samson

Liz Greenspan

Luca Brenner

Mark Perl

Mika Brenner

Robbie Schaeffer

Sheri Schlesinger

Sydney

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Classes are resuming on
Monday October 19th.
To see the schedule goto
beverlyhillssynagogue.org

**Happy
Anniversary**

**JJ & Wendy
Wallack**

**WELCOME NEW
MEMBER**

NORA HOLTZ

hebrew reading course

with Chazzan Nati Baram



In this class, we will be reading and translating famous Hebrew speeches and other Inspirational texts, not biblical Hebrew.

The goal is to improve vocabulary and help develop a faster and easier approach to reading Hebrew articles and literature.

The class is for those who already have a beginners knowledge of Hebrew and can read, but are looking to enhance their skills.

Please email office@yinbh.org for more details

ב"ה BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE PRESENTS
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SHLOMO CARLEBACH TRIBUTE CONCERT



**Rabbi
Pini Dunner**



**Cantor
Nati Baram**

PLUS SURPRISE GUESTS

Sunday, November 1st 2020
LA 10:30 | NY 13:30 | UK 18:30 | ISRAEL 20:30

Sign up at
www.beverlyhillsynagogue.org/carlebach

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