Dearest Members and Friends,

One of William Shakespeare’s best-known quotes is: “Be not afraid of greatness – some are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them.”

Those who achieve greatness often defy advance prediction. Such a man was the late Rabbi Eleazar Menachem Man Shach, whose 18th yahrtzeit we commemorated last month. A Lithuanian-born yeshiva-trained scholar lucky enough to emerge from Nazi-occupied Europe, in 1940 he settled in Palestine where he struggled to find income as a yeshiva teacher, despite his previous experience running a significant yeshiva in Europe. He was eventually hired to teach at Ponevezh, a remarkable institution created by the legendary Ponevezher Rav, Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman. Rabbi Shach proved very popular with students, although he was initially overshadowed by his colleague Rabbi Shmuel Rozovsky, a masterful pedagogue whose clarity and scholarship made him the undisputed superstar Talmud lecturer at the yeshiva.

In retrospect, Rabbi Shach was typical of many rabbis like him who had survived the Holocaust – qualified, competent, pious, a scholar, and deeply committed to the cause of reestablishing the world that had been destroyed. And just like most of these rabbinic colleagues, including those who had excelled in Europe, Rabbi Shach struggled to succeed in the postwar Jewish world, amidst an atmosphere where old-world Judaism seemed very much in decline. Making a living was difficult, and incidental concerns, among them ideological leadership, were remote considerations, if they were considerations at all.

But in contrast to others, in the early-1970s, with the passing or decline of the older generation of rabbis who took on leadership roles after the Holocaust, Rabbi Shach emerged as the preeminent spokesperson for the non-Zionist orthodox Jewish community who chose active if cautious cooperation with the State of Israel as its modus operandi. For over a quarter of a century he presided over this community, his pronouncements true to his core values, his every word and action considered and calculated.

Remarkably, this powerful message is utterly consistent with Rabbi Shach’s interpretation of a curious Midrash on Parshat Vayishlach. The Midrash attributes the tragedy of Jacob’s daughter Dinah’s kidnapping by Shechem to his not having given Dinah to Esau as a wife, instead hiding her in a box so that Esau wouldn’t see her. Had Jacob allowed Esau to marry Dinah, says the Midrash, perhaps Esau would have repented from his sinful ways. Many commentaries query this idea: does the Midrash seriously believe Jacob was wrong to protect his daughter from Esau? Rabbi Shach dismisses this notion. On the contrary, he says, Jacob did the right thing. Rather, the Midrash is taking Jacob to task for not being regretful that he had to hide his daughter. Just for a moment Jacob should have paused to consider his brother’s depressed spiritual condition that forced him to hide her, and felt a moment of sadness.

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We, who benefit from the incredible warmth and depth of Jewish tradition, should never forget that those who lack what we have are not “others”, but “brothers”, and their lack of Judaism must never be treated merely as an excuse to criticize. Instead it should remind us that as members of our family, their reduced involvement in Jewish life is a terrible scar. It was this visceral feeling of sorrow that elevated Rabbi Shach above his rabbinic peers, and the reason why greatness was thrust upon him.

Wishing you Shabbat Shalom, and a great week ahead,

Rabbi Pini Dunner
Yahrtzeit — 20 Kislev

Anne Gendis
Chana Braina bat Yosef a"h
Mother of Steve Dorfman

Happy Birthday

Andrew Levin
Ariella Sassover
Daniel Ross
Jeremy Wizman
Manucher Mostadim
Sydney Hogan

Happy Anniversary

Steven & Esther Feder
George & Suzi Fischmann
Evan & Liz Greenspan
Hillel & Ruthie Kellerman
David & Allison Sostchen
Sam & Sue Varon

MESSAGE FROM ELAINE LEVY, MOTHER OF WENDY WALLACK

Dear Rabbi Dunner, Chazan Baram and Congregation,

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for all the support you have given me and my family during shiva. I am in awe of the community. The amount of outpouring love and compassion is what carried my daughters and me through the last week. May my husband’s memory be for a blessing. David ben Shmuel HaLevi.

Gratefully,
Elaine Levy

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Gratefully,
Elaine Levy

Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy 72nd Annual Scholarship Gala celebrating our community giant, Ernie Goldberger and community educator Rabbi Eli Broner. Thursday December, 19th at the Beverly Hilton. To RSVP and Submit Digital Journal Ads please visit: www.Hillelhebrew.org/banquet
Monday Evening Study Group

WITH CHAZZAN NATI BARAM

The focus of the group is to explore halacha using a unique curriculum tool that was developed in Israel called Tzurra M’Rabban. It is a systematic and concise learning method, from the Talmudic source through modern day Halachic application.

Following Mincha, approximately 5:15pm
on Monday evenings

FOR MORE DETAILS EMAIL OFFICE@YINBH.ORG OR CALL (310) 276-7650
CHANUKAH SHABBAT DINNER

Friday, December 27th, 2019
Sixth Night of Chanukah
$45 for adults; $25 for children
Warm Casual Kid-friendly Atmosphere

4:15 pm Menorah & Candle Lighting
4:30pm Mincha & Children's Activities
5:15pm Chanukah Shabbat Dinner

- For All Ages
- Menorah Lighting
- Games and Prizes
- Latkes & Donuts
- Kid-Friendly Menu
- Chanukah Songs
- Dreidel Games
- and more!

For your Child to participate in the Shabbat Service, email Chazzan Nati Baram at Baramnati@gmail.com

Special Puppet Show Performance:
"Danny & The Dragon"
For kids of all ages

RSVP
$45 for Adults; $25 for Children
RSVP at Beverlyhillssynagogue.org or call the office at 310-276-7650

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Beverly Hills, CA 90210