



# Tefilla Notebook

4 Tevet • Miketz

December 18-19, 2020

Steven Dorfman, President

Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi

Nafi Bar-Am, Chazan



## SHABBAT SCHEDULE

### FRIDAY DECEMBER 18TH

4:28pm CANDLELIGHTING

4:30pm FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19TH

8:45am PESUKEI D'ZIMRA

9:00am MORNING SERVICES

4:30pm MINCHA

5:32pm SHABBAT ENDS

## WEEKDAY DAVENING TIMES

Sunday 8:00am & 4:30pm  
 Mon- Fri 7:00am & 4:30pm

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

Thank you to **Errol & Pat Fine** for donating a Pat's Dinner to our winning team at this week's Trivia Night!

Congratulations to team 3!

Stay tuned for other fun game nights



## Mazal Tov

Philip & Janice Kaufler on their new great-granddaughter, born to Shira & Daniel Sacks in Teaneck, NJ. Mazal Tov to grandparents Keli & Robert Teichman

Those who are going to be attending our in-person minyanim **must pre-register at** [beverlyhillssynagogue.org/protocols](https://beverlyhillssynagogue.org/protocols) Services are open to MEMBERS ONLY at this time. ALL services are being held at a private residence

Dear Members and Friends,

Allen Saunders (1899–1986) was an American writer, journalist and cartoonist, best known for his syndicated comic strip *Steve Roper and Mike Nomad*. Less well-known is the fact that he coined the pithy observation, "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans" – a remark later immortalized in the John Lennon song *Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)*.

We all plan out or think we are planning out our lives, often down to the last detail. But there is no way we can know all the variables, nor are we able to predict the unknowable. Often what we see in front of us and around us is just a partial picture, with so much going on in the background that we are simply unaware of. And yet, we all make decisions based on an incomplete set of facts and map out our lives heading in one direction, blithely unaware that we are actually proceeding in a totally different direction.

Occasionally, there are those in our lives who have knowledge and information that we don't – the kind of knowledge and information that could affect the way we make decisions. They observe us as we blunder around in a haze of ignorance, or more often they watch us living in a bubble of content self-delusion even as we hurtle toward disaster.

In the 1998 movie *The Truman Show*, Jim Carrey plays Truman Burbank, a cheery young adult who is living a seemingly ordinary suburban life somewhere in Middle America. In actual fact, his entire life is a reality TV show that is taking place on a set populated by actors. Everyone besides for Truman is in on the secret, with each and every aspect of his life carefully scripted in advance.

The drama builds as Truman slowly becomes aware that there is something deeply wrong with his reality, until, at the climax of the movie, after he has found an exit door that will take him into the real world, Truman has a showdown with the show's creator – the enigmatic Christoff, played by Ed Harris. Christoff – using an off-set speaker system – vainly tries to convince Truman to remain on the set, bizarrely suggesting that there is "no more truth" in the real world than there is in the manufactured world of the show, and that if Truman stays in his artificial world, he would never have anything to fear or worry about. It is a tense, dramatic scene. In that moment, suddenly everything comes together, with the revelation of that one crucial piece of information which explains everything. Truman may have spent his life making other plans, but there is no way he can turn back now. Quite understandably, when faced with the true facts about his situation, Truman opts for a life outside the show and beyond the set that has been his home since birth.

As we read through the Torah portions that deal with the strife and drama of Jacob's family, bitter enmity that almost result in the murder of Joseph – the beloved son who is ultimately sold into slavery by his jealous brothers – it almost feels as if we are the audience watching a reality show. In Parshat Miketz, Joseph is brought into the know, as he suddenly becomes aware of the backdrop to all of his travails, when out of the blue his brothers appear in Egypt to obtain food for the family back in Canaan. It is a "Eureka!" moment – his brothers are now bowing to him just as had been predicted in his contentious dreams decades earlier. Meanwhile, his brothers continue to base all of their actions and reactions on an incomplete set of facts. And we – the off-set audience – are able to observe the contrast between these two perspectives: Joseph, whose plans reflect his clear knowledge of what is going on; and Joseph's brothers, whose lives seem to be happening to them while they are busy making other plans.

It has always struck me that this embarrassingly detailed narrative, in which Joseph's brothers are made to look like absolute fools, is meant to convey a very precise message. If your perspective is limited to an incomplete set of facts, you can be as great as the sons of Jacob and still mess things up. The sages of the Talmud unanimously pronounce the superlative greatness of all of Joseph's brothers, and yet we see how badly they fared simply because they were unaware of the crucial information which would have shifted their perspective completely – namely, that Joseph was just as special as they were, that he was still alive, and that he was the political leader of Egypt.

This lesson translates into our world on numerous fronts, but it is particularly pertinent with reference to the recommendation this week by several rabbinic leaders in the United States and Israel not to take the COVID-19 vaccine. I don't profess to know too much about vaccines, but what I do know is that epidemiological experts unanimously recommend taking the vaccine (except, of course, if one suffers from severe allergic reactions). I am also acutely aware that the relevant experts know much more about this topic than I do, or ever will. And while those rabbis who condemn the vaccine may be very great and unimpeachably devout, their perspective on this issue is clearly inadequate, and their scientific knowledge is incomplete. To offer an opinion in such circumstances only exposes their limitations, but much more worryingly, it potentially puts people's lives in danger.

Plato observed that "opinion is the medium between knowledge and ignorance." When making plans for life, and certainly for life-and-death situations, knowledge is key, opinion is ignorance, and ignorance is dangerous.

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom and a great week ahead,

*Rabbi Pini Dunner*

*Sisterhood Corner*

**December**

Thank you to our Trivia nerds for participating in our Chanukah Trivia!

Many thanks to Darryl, Carly, Madeline, Pat's Restaurant,

and those who worked to make trivia night successful.

A good time was had by all!

Join Rabbi Pini Dunner's Treasures from the Rabbi's Library  
December 27th, 2020 at 11am

Email [office@yinh.org](mailto:office@yinh.org) for the Zoom link

Chodesh Tevet Tov  
&

Shabbat Shalom,  
Cecile & Ruthie

*Sisterhood Co-Presidents*

**YAHRTZEITS**



**Joe Fialkov**  
Yosef Zalman ben Chaim z"l  
Father of  
**Howie Fialkov**  
Yahrtzeit— 8 Tevet

**Margaret Friedman**  
Miriam bat Mendel a"m  
Mother of  
**Jerry Friedman**  
Yahrtzeit— 7 Tevet

**Eliyahu Gaba**  
Eliyahu ben Mordechai z"l  
Father of  
**Ruth Gaba**  
Yahrtzeit— 6 Tevet

**Yisroel David Mikel z"l**  
Father of  
**Chavi Hertz**  
Yahrtzeit— 9 Tevet

**Imre Schaeffer**  
Noach ben Moshe z"l  
Father of  
**George Schaeffer**  
Yahrtzeit— 8 Tevet

**Leonard Stoll**  
Chaim Aryeh ben Moshe z"l  
Father of  
**Seymour Stoll**  
Yahrtzeit— 4 Tevet

*Happy Anniversary*

**David & Allison  
SOSTCHEN  
Evan & Liz  
GREENSPAN  
Steven & Esther  
FEDER  
Bob & Nadine  
ZELLER  
John & Sherri  
FOGELMAN**

**Sam & Sue  
VARON  
50th  
Anniversary**



*Ariella Sassover  
Andrew Levin  
Jonathan Garshofsky  
Benjamin Samuel*

*Liam Mostadim  
Ryan Cohen  
Eliezer Zucker  
Shlomo Dunner  
Sarah Meier  
Daniel Kramer*



**CELEBRATE** 

**PESACH SEDERS**

**AT YINBH**

**IN 2021** 



Details to be announced in early 2021  
 Register for more info by  
 emailing [office@yinbh.org](mailto:office@yinbh.org)  
 or  
 calling (310) 276 7650

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 YOUNG ISRAEL OF NORTH BEVERLY HILLS

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 YOUNG ISRAEL OF NORTH BEVERLY HILLS

**TREASURES  
 FROM THE  
 RABBI'S  
 LIBRARY**



with  
**RABBI  
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 DUNNER**

**LAST  
 CLASS**

DEC 27TH • 11AM PST

EMAIL [OFFICE@YINBH.ORG](mailto:OFFICE@YINBH.ORG)  
 FOR THE ZOOM LINK

Thank you to **Chavi Hertz** for sponsoring  
 the Treasures from the Rabbi's Library Class  
 in memory of her father, **Yisroel David  
 Mikel z"l**, whose yahrtzeit is on 9 Tevet

**Donuts!**

**Sufganiyot Drive-Through for our Members**

