



# Tefilla Notebook

11 Tevet • Vayigash

December 25-26, 2020

Steven Dorfman, President

Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi

Nati Bar-Am, Chazan



## SHABBAT SCHEDULE

### FRIDAY DECEMBER 25TH

4:32pm CANDLELIGHTING

4:15pm FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26TH

8:45am PESUKEI D'ZIMRA

9:00am MORNING SERVICES

4:35pm MINCHA

5:36pm SHABBAT ENDS

## WEEKDAY DAVENING TIMES

Sunday 8:00am & 4:35pm  
 Mon- Fri 7:00am & 4:35pm

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

## Mazal Tov

Raquel and Noah Swartz on becoming Israeli Citizens!



Mazal Tov to Larry & Judith Garshofsky

## Thank You!

**Howie & Shirin Fialkov** for sponsoring this past week's Parsha shiur in memory of Howie's father, **Joe Fialkov, Yosef Zalman ben Chaim z"l**, whose first yahrtzeit was on 8 Tevet.

**Harry & Bill Schnapp** (from Sydney, Australia) for sponsoring this past week's Pirkei Avot class in memory of Harry's father, **Meir ben Naftali Hirsch z"l**, whose yahrtzeit is on 10 Tevet.

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

Dear Members and Friends,

The iconoclastic social philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), in his book *Beyond Good and Evil*, made a pithy observation about lying and how it affects relationships: "Not that you lied to me, but that I no longer believe you, has shaken me."

But how are we to discern lies from truth? We all imagine ourselves to be good judges of character, and sincerely believe that we can tell when someone is not being truthful. But too often we are proven wrong.

In the early 1890s, the pioneering German psychiatrist Anton Delbrück (1862-1944) identified a mental condition that he referred to as "pathological lying," in which a person habitually or compulsively lies. Although it is not uncommon for people to fib to get themselves out of difficult situations, or to avoid embarrassing others, pathological liars consistently and needlessly tell untruths that are elaborate and fanciful, although their lies do not necessarily breach the limits of credibility. Often painting themselves as either heroes or victims, pathological liars can be very convincing – usually because they have come to believe the web of lies they have constructed, and are incapable of distinguishing fact from fiction.

Lying, even pathological lying, is much more common than we are comfortable admitting. Tim Levine is the Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Department of Communication Studies at Alabama University, and has assiduously studied lying and deception for almost 25 years. According to him there are four principal reasons that cause people to lie: to cover up a mistake or transgression; financial gain; personal gain; or to get out of difficult situations. His studies have shown that almost fifty percent of people tell up to five lies a day. He also notes that most of the commonly held views regarding liars are, ironically, untrue. "Almost everywhere people say that liars won't look you in the eye when they're lying, but there is absolutely no evidence to support that." Pathological liars sometimes get so caught up in their lies, that the stories they have created can come to define their lives. In 1918, Bolshevik revolutionaries went ahead and executed all the remaining members of the Romanov royal family—Tsar Nicholas II and Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, along with their five children—in a basement in Yekaterinburg. After the shocking news was revealed, rumors quickly spread that the youngest Romanov daughter, Anastasia, had somehow escaped. Over the years, a number of imposters attempted to pass themselves off as the Russian royal, but none was more determined than the Polish fraudster Franziska Schanzkowska, later known as Anna Anderson.

After being hospitalized at a mental institution in the wake of a suicide attempt in 1920, she began to claim that she was Grand Duchess Anastasia, an assertion that was bizarrely supported by various former Romanov hangers-on. Despite being dismissed by the wider Romanov family as an imposter, she persisted with her claims, and never relented until the end of her life. But a few years after she died in 1987 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Romanov bodies were recovered and DNA tests proved that she had been a fraud all along.

In Parshat Vayigash, Joseph's brothers returned from Egypt and told Jacob his long-lost son was alive and well (Gen. 45:26): וַיִּגְדּוּ לוֹ לֵאמֹר עוֹד יוֹסֵף חַי וְכֵי הוּא מִשְׁלַל בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיַּגֵּד לָבֹא כִּי לֹא הָאֵמִין לָהֶם - "they told him 'Joseph is still alive. He is the ruler of all Egypt'; but his heart became numb, as he did not believe them." The Midrash notes that "this is the fate of the liar – even when they tell the truth they won't be believed." It was a classic case of the liar's paradox – which "truth" was Jacob meant to believe? The one where his sons had said Joseph was dead, or the one where they said he was alive?

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig points out an intriguing anomaly, based on another story from the Hebrew Scriptures. When Delilah asked her husband Samson to tell her how he had merited his incredible physical power, he spun her one yarn after another to mislead her. Eventually he relented, however, and told her the true source of his strength, whereupon the verse informs us that she knew he wasn't lying (Jud. 16:18). The Talmud points out that this was because "the truth is clearly discernable" (Sot. 9b), which means that although Samson had lied to her in the past, when he told the truth she knew he wasn't lying. Well, if that is indeed the case, why did Jacob not believe his sons when they informed him that Joseph was alive, which was true?

This question perfectly highlights the difference between ordinary lies and pathological lies. If a person's motivation is only to mislead those he is lying to, they know they are lying. But when a liar believes their falsehood to be the essence of truth, it's a whole different ballgame. Joseph's brothers had convinced themselves that their younger brother was guilty of a capital crime and that he had to die. As far as they were concerned, the sale of Joseph into slavery was farming out his justified execution to others – he was a "dead man walking" and his death was sure to come very soon. Consequently, when they informed Jacob that Joseph had been killed, they were so convinced what they were saying was true it turned their malicious fabrication into a pathological lie, and the lies of someone who believes their own falsehood is indistinguishable from the truth, both for them and for us. Meanwhile, Samson's lies were transparent self-serving deceptions that he knew very well were lies even as he uttered them, and when he finally blurted out the truth the distinction was immediately evident to Delilah.

One of the most frightening aspects of the modern era is the prevalence of pathological lies brazenly touted as fact. Sadly, this phenomenon has gotten progressively worse, resulting in a situation where even unimpeachable truths are doubted. Traditional Jewish sources describe the material world as the "domain of falsehood." Perhaps there was a time when the world was merely false. Tragically, today, it has evolved into a "domain of pathological falsehood," which means that our quest for the real truth must be more determined than ever.

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom and a great week ahead,

*Rabbi Pini Dunner*



## Sisterhood Corner

December

We wish you an easy fast on Asara B'Tevet.

Make sure to join Rabbi Pini Dunner's Treasures from the Rabbi's Library

December 27, 2020 at 11am  
Email [office@yinbh.org](mailto:office@yinbh.org) for the Zoom link

Let's get ready to say goodbye to 2020!

Shabbat Shalom,  
Cecile & Ruthie  
Sisterhood Co-Presidents

As we come to the close of 2020, we would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the best way to support your community is to make a year end donation to Beverly Hills Synagogue.

In addition to paying any open balance, please consider making an additional contribution to support our Synagogue. In order to maximize your 2020 tax benefits, all contributions must be received by Thursday, December 31st, 2020.

If you have any questions about your outstanding balance, please email [mkramer@yinbh.org](mailto:mkramer@yinbh.org) or call the office at 310-276-7650

We thank you for your support of YINBH Beverly Hills Synagogue.

## YAHRTZEITS



**Lawrence Einfeld**  
Eliyahu ben Hachaver Mordechai z"l  
Grandfather of  
**Carly Einfeld**  
Yahrtzeit— 13 Tevet

**Hedy Orden**  
Chana bat Chaim a"h  
Mother of  
**Helen Sassover**  
Yahrtzeit— 17 Tevet

**Eve Fine**  
Chava bat Mordechai a"h  
Mother of  
**Richard Fine**  
Yahrtzeit— 12 Tevet

**Anita Rothman**  
Chana bat Baruch a"h  
Mother of  
**Stephen Rothman**  
Yahrtzeit— 15 Tevet



*Samuel Schlesinger*  
*Edward Czuker*  
*Ethan Ruimy*

*Dalia Wizman*  
*Helen Sassover*  
*Daniel Varon*  
*Galina Samuel*

**ישיבה BEVERLY HILLS SYNAGOGUE**  
YOUNG ISRAEL OF NORTH BEVERLY HILLS

**TREASURES  
FROM THE  
RABBI'S  
LIBRARY**

**LAST  
CLASS**



**with  
RABBI  
PINI  
DUNNER**

**DEC 27TH • 11AM PST**

**EMAIL OFFICE@YINBH.ORG  
FOR THE ZOOM LINK**



# 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



# Member Musings

## CHANUKA CONCERT ON ZOOM by Rivka Nissel

With the fact that I grew up around the corner from the Vienna State Opera and all the major concert halls, music by Arnold Schonberg was introduced to me early in life. It took time to comprehend his atonal music, but gradually it grew on me and I began to appreciate his music like a rose bud which does not show it's beautiful petals at the start of planting. My passion was and still is classical music.

That's how I felt listening to Steve Rothstein's composition of Hanerot Halalu, a Chanukah song. We repeat year after year our traditional melodies and are taught them from parent to child, from generation to generation. Arnold Schonberg opened my mind to appreciate music like Rothstein, who clings to tradition yet modernizes old tunes in contrapunkt, and Schonberg did this marvelously with his sinister Kol Nidre piece.

Without an adoring crowd nor the usual applause a performer receives, what is there left? A screen, a microphone, an empty shul, vacant chairs... But our esteemed Rabbi Dunner and acclaimed Chazan Baram ushered in a regular Sunday morning with uplifting tunes and Divrei Torah.

Oh, how I adored Shlomo Carlebach, who in front of a sold out concert hall sang his heart out. We are all familiar with Carlebach's music and we joined in when Rabbi Dunner, with guitar slung over his shoulder, sang Carlebach's songs so enthusiastically.

Carmit, you always stand by your husband humbly and accompany him with your talent and incredible musical skills.

I loved the carousel of old Chanukah songs, performed by Chazan Chaim David Berson of KJ Synagogue, and I hummed along while preparing my festive menu for the next day when our family would assemble for a Chanukah meal.

The grand finale with Mah-Ohz-Tzoor and the Hatikva sung again as a duet by Rabbi Dunner and Chazan Nati Baram, evoke deep appreciation by all of us listening to the concert.

Nati, Kol ha Kavod, this was not an easy task. What an epic triumph achieved during this time of raging pandemic and isolation!

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