

This week's Tefilla Notebook is sponsored by **Margaret & Michael Bayer** in memory of Margaret's mother, **Bella Magenheim, Bayla bat Shmuel a"h**, whose yahrtzeit is on 22 Tevet

Tefilla Notebook

18 Tevet • Vayechi

January 1-2, 2021

Steven Dorfman, President • Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi • Nati Bar-Am, Chazan

SHABBAT SCHEDULE FRIDAY JANUARY 1ST

- 4:36pm CANDLELIGHTING
- 4:40pm FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES
- SATURDAY, JANUARY 2ND**
- 8:45am PESUKEI D'ZIMRA
- 9:00am MORNING SERVICES
- 4:45pm MINCHA
- 5:41pm SHABBAT ENDS

WEEKDAY DAVENING TIMES

Sunday 8:00am & 4:40pm
 Mon- Fri 7:00am & 4:40pm

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

Mazal Tov
 Steve & Vivian Dorfman on the engagement of Zachary Dorfman to Maral Javaharian



THANK YOU

Shawney & Richard Fine for sponsoring this week's Pirkei Avot in memory of Shawney's father, **Joseph Wagner, HaRav Yosef Chaim ben Eliyahu z"l**, whose yahrtzeit is on 22 Tevet

THANK YOU FROM JANICE KAUFLE

Janice would like to thank the entire YINBH community for the outpouring expression of support in this difficult time upon losing her mother, Gertrude Fox, a"h. The well wishes and meals throughout the shiva period has been overwhelming. These are times when the big heart of the community is much appreciated, and our community once again has been outstanding in every regard. Nearly every member and the clergy have reached out directly to Janice, even through the challenges of Covid.

Dear Members and Friends,
 On the first night of Pesach, we begin our Seder by saying Mah Nishtana Halayla HazeH Mikol Haleilot? – “why is this night different from all other nights?” It is a classic question of Jewish tradition, prompting us to explore the unique aspects of Seder night, when we commemorate the Exodus from Egypt via a variety of diverse customs. This blunt question compels us to create an atmosphere of heightened awareness, reminding us that going through the motions is simply not good enough. Rather, we must remind ourselves at every stage that Seder night is different, thereby ensuring that each aspect of difference becomes a platform for greater awareness of what it means to be a Jew, which will hopefully induce us to increase our faith in God and push us in the direction of a deepened dedication to our Jewish identity.



Most people's lives are monotonous to the extent that no night is really different from any other, with days blending into one another, and weeks and months flying by in a blur, a seeming avalanche of sameness and uniformity. Seder night challenges us to break that monotony, and to use the differences as a wake-up call, so that we ask questions that in the grind of day-to-day life we may never get to ask ourselves, or indeed others. Who are we? Why are we here? What is important to us? What is not so important?

And it is not merely a moment of personal reflection, like the High Holidays, nor should it be treated as a festival of unbridled celebration, like Sukkot. Somehow Seder night combines both of these elements, and at the same time it is much more than that. No wonder that a 2013 Pew Research survey of Jewish Americans found that attending a Seder is by far the most popular Jewish identity event of the Jewish calendar year. Although only 23% of U.S. Jews attend religious services once a month or more, a staggering 70% said that they participated in Seder night, which includes 42% of “Jews of no religion,” in other words, Jews who are self-declared atheists or agnostics.

You are probably wondering why I am writing about Seder night in the middle of winter, long before any of us is even thinking about Passover. The simple answer is this: I feel that New Year's Eve 2021 is a unique Seder night moment for everyone who has lived through 2020. Because while you are probably hard-pressed to recall the details of any New Year's Eve you may have experienced in the past, I am quite certain that the changeover from 2020 to 2021 will be one you remember for the rest of your life. That being the case, it is appropriate to be asking yourself: Mah Nishtana Halayla HazeH Mikol Haleilot? – “why is this night different from all other nights?” In other words, how is the fact that this changeover from one year to the next is so different from any other going to affect me as a person?

And before you jump down my throat for highlighting a non-Jewish holiday as being significant, let me just remind you that while the Jewish religious calendar is lunar, our cycle of years is periodically augmented with the addition of an extra month so that we remain in sync with the solar calendar, to ensure that our festivals coincide with the seasons of the year. Consequently, the secular solar calendar is very much a part of Jewish life, even if it is not as significant as our religious lunar calendar. To dismiss the solar years cycle as irrelevant to Jews is to misunderstand the importance Judaism puts in integrating our elevated faith world with all the practical aspects of the world around us.

There is no doubt that 2020 will live on in our memories as one of the most challenging years any of us has ever faced; it will be recalled as one of the most testing years of modern history. Our lives were upended in so many ways, individually and collectively, and even now, as the year ends, the dreadful 2020 pandemic continues to cause havoc, with massive surges in infections and fatalities. Yearend reviews ordinarily chart a kaleidoscope of both positives and negatives for the year that is coming to a close, but this year it seems that no one has anything positive to say about a year that has been so devastating for all of us on so many fronts.

Faced with this moment of reflection, namely a New Year's Eve unlike any we have ever had or may ever have again, it is worth focusing on these differences as a prompt to answer some fundamental questions about who we are and what in our lives is truly important. But above all, we should be conscious of God's hand in all of this, rather than writing 2020 off as a random series of dreadful events devoid of any kind of Divine message.

At the end of Parshat Vayechi, the Torah records how after Jacob died, Joseph's brothers were frightened that he would now exact revenge against them for having sold him into slavery, and they approach him seeking his mercy and forgiveness. Joseph's response is nothing short of inspiring. “Have no fear,” he says, asking them rhetorically: “am I a substitute for God?” אַתֶּם הַשְּׂבָתִים עָלַי רַחֵם אֱלֹהִים הַשְּׂבָתָה לְטוֹבָה — although you intended me harm, God intended it for good.” (Gen. 50:20)

This year may have been different to any other, with endless harm and devastation, and there may be no fun or celebration as the number changes from 20 to 21 – but let us reserve judgement until we have some real perspective. In the meantime, we should focus on the positive, with Joseph as our inspiration. After all, in a few short months we have all discovered what is truly important to us and what really matters, and how even in the midst of extraordinary challenges, the human spirit and our capacity to get through anything is, if anything, stronger than ever. And in the final analysis, even as we hunker down and wait for the light to appear at the end of the tunnel, let us use the jarring differences between any previous New Year's Eve and the 20/21 changeover to remind ourselves with all the faith we can muster that “God intended it for good.”

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

Sisterhood Corner

January

Out with the old, in with the new!
Wishing you all health and happiness in
the new year!

Many thanks to everyone who
donated to
Chai Lifeline's Chanukah toy drive.
Your generosity is deeply appreciated.

Happy New Year
&
Shabbat Shalom,
Cecile & Ruthie
Sisterhood Co-Presidents



*Jasmin Naim
Judi Fogelman
David Ross
Samuel Thompson
Albert Azouz
David Feigen
Robert Perl
Andrew Perl
Paul Almond
Ezra Kest
Jason Huberman*

**Happy
Anniversary**
**Jaime & Marilyn
Sohacheski**

YAHRTZEITS

Helen Baum
Miriam Henia bat Yechezkel
Yaakov HaLevi a”h
Mother of
Michael Baum
Annie Baum
Roberta Kimmel
Yahrtzeit— 19 Tevet

Donna Michelle Gross
Rachel Daniella bat Moshe a”h
Sister of
Jeff Gross
Yahrtzeit— 19 Tevet

Harold Markowitz
Benjamin Tzvi ben Yitzchak
z”l
Husband of
Vera Markowitz
Yahrtzeit— 22 Tevet

Bella Magenheim
Bayla bat Shmuel a”h
Mother of
Margaret Bayer
Yahrtzeit— 22 Tevet

Joseph Wagner
HaRav Yosef Chaim ben
Eliyahu z”l
Father of
Shawney Fine
Yahrtzeit— 22 Tevet



SOHACHESKI FAMILY CENTER
Chai Lifeline
WEST COAST

475 S. Robertson Blvd 310-274-6331 main www.chailifeline.org
Beverly Hills, CA 90211 310-274-6447 fax 877-374-6331

December 24, 2020

Young Israel of North Beverly Hills
9261 Alden Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
ATTN: YINBH Chai Lifeline Toy Drive Participants:

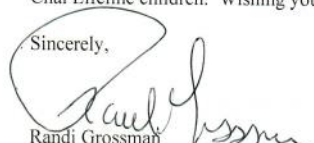
Dear Friends:

On behalf of the children of Chai Lifeline, I want to thank the many members of Young Israel of North Beverly Hills who participated in this year's Chanukah Toy Drive. Your generosity in selecting gifts from our Amazon Wish List is so very much appreciated, especially given the difficult year our families have experienced.

We received such a large and wonderful assortment of gifts from your congregation and delighted in distributing them to our young clients. After so many dark months of navigating serious illness in the face of COVID-19, your kindness created a bright spot for our families with these joyful Chanukah gifts!

Thank you again for including us in your Chanukah celebration and for bringing joy to our Chai Lifeline children. Wishing you all a healthy and happy 2021!

Sincerely,


Randi Grossman
West Coast Regional Director

Randi Grossman, MPH, Regional Director • Rabbi Nachum Sauer, Rabbinical Advisor

Rabbi Simcha Scholier, Executive Vice President • Rabbi Avrohom Cohen, Executive Director • Rabbi Mordechai Gobioff, Director of Client Services
International Office 151 W 30th Street NY, NY 10001 • 212-465-1300 • 877-CHAI-LIFE • fax 212-465-0949