

Tefilla Notebook

This week's Tefilla Notebook is sponsored by **Steve & Vivian Dorfman** in memory of Steve's father, **Alex Dorfman Tzvi ben David Hacohen z"l** whose yahrtzeit was on the 26th of Nissan.

27-28 Nissan • Shemini • Birkat Hachodesh

April 9-10, 2021

Steven Dorfman, President

Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi

Nati Bar-Am, Chazan

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY APRIL 9TH

CANDLELIGHTING 7:02pm

FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES 6:30pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 10TH

GEMARA SHIUR: 8:30AM

PESUKEI D'ZIMRA 9:15AM

MORNING SERVICES 9:30AM

MINCHA 7:15pm

SHABBAT ENDS 8:06pm

WEEKDAY DAVENING TIMES

Sunday 8:00am & 7:15pm

Mon-Thu 7:00am & 7:15pm

ROSH CHODESH IYAR
MONDAY AND TUESDAY

MAZEL TOV

Baby boy born to

Joshua and Merav Feder

in New York

nephew to Nicole and Ariana

Grandson of

Steven and Esther Feder,

Faye and Hartley Koschitzky

Great grandmother Vera Brozin



MAZEL TOV

Brigitte Silkin on her
engagement to
Alan Schwartz



Thank you to

Galina and Joe Samuel for
Sponsoring Kiddush in
memory of Galina's father,
Sam Deutsch, Shmaya
ben Moshe Leib z"l, whose
yahrtzeit was on 23 Nissan

Dear Members and Friends,

Last July, after dropping off my son Meir at the IDF draft office in Tiberias, and before I went to Ben Gurion Airport to catch my flight back to Los Angeles, I visited the Biblical Museum of Natural History at its new state-of-the-art site on the outskirts of Beit Shemesh.

At the time, Israel was still deep in lockdown, so I had the museum all to myself as I embarked on a private tour led by the museum's founder and devoted director, the indefatigable Rabbi Dr. Natan Slifkin, who besides for being a rabbi is also a zoologist and an authority on all living things – particularly from the perspective of traditional Judaism and Jewish history.

The museum facility was not quite ready, and we traipsed through the building without the benefit of air-conditioning (fear not, it has since been fully installed). But I didn't feel we were flogging a dead horse, or belling the cat, or putting the cart before the horse. On the contrary – and without letting the cat out of the bag – I felt I was in the presence of a fatted calf, and clearly this was no pig in a poke (for obvious reasons!). Evidently, Rabbi Slifkin has been a busy beaver, putting together an emporium that will educate, enthrall, enchant and enthuse visitors of all ages.

Stuffed animals can be found cheek-by-jowl with their live counterparts in a carefully choreographed journey through the biogeography of ancient and modern Israel, showcasing a range of extinct and extant animals, both native and imported. And, of course, there is a section dedicated to animals, birds and fish that are kosher, and those which are not. There is even a kosher insect – the locust – best eaten crunchy, an effect best achieved by dropping them into a boiling broth, cleaning them off, rolling them in a mixture of flour, coriander seeds, garlic and chili-powder – and then deep-frying them. It's a kind of locust schnitzel, although – full disclosure – this delicacy is not available at the museum cafeteria.

Rabbi Slifkin's impressive knowledge is more-than easily matched by his infectious enthusiasm for his chosen subject of expertise: Jewish zoology. For example, did you know that a neshar is not an eagle, as assumed by such rabbinic greats as the medieval Provençal luminary R. Isaac ben Abba Mari (c. 1122 – c. 1193; author of Sefer Ha-Itur), as well as by his thirteenth century colleague R. Hezekiah ben Manoah, author of the biblical commentary Chizkuni. They, along with countless other French and German rabbis who agreed with this misidentification, had never laid eyes on the Middle East-based griffon vulture, "a spectacular bird with a wingspan that can measure eight feet ... the most magnificent bird of prey in Israel." Understandably, they opted to identify the neshar as a comparable bird of prey which is native to Western Europe – the eagle – even though there are no eagles in the Land of Israel.

Here's another one. The behemoth animal mentioned in the Book of Job (40:15) is not some mythical marauding beast, but is actually a hippopotamus. Rabbi Slifkin has countless proofs, which he presents enthusiastically and convincingly, before leading you into his Hall of Shofars, followed by the Hall of Small Animals, and then the Serpentarium. Suddenly, I found myself holding two ferocious looking lizards with a live python around my neck. But after two weeks in isolation, I thought to myself, any company is good company.

Before visiting the Biblical Museum of Natural History, I had always wondered why the Torah seemingly wastes verbiage on identifying the various animals that we can't eat. Do we really need to know, as stated in Shmini (Lev. 11:5-6), that the hare and the hyrax "chew the cud" (incidentally, a highly controversial topic, on which Rabbi Slifkin has plenty to say)? And do we really need to know that the pig has split hooves but is not a ruminant?

Why would the Torah distract us with biological observations regarding animals that are prohibited? After all, the Torah could simply give us a list of the half dozen-or-so animals that we can eat, rather than present us with the curious if somewhat unique characteristics of a bunch of animals which in any event are forbidden. And why do we need to know the specific name of each forbidden bird? The Talmud (Chullin 59a) provides us with specific signs via which both kosher and non-kosher birds can be identified—why doesn't the Torah just do the same thing?

But I think that is exactly the point. God's purpose for His Chosen People was never meant to be limited to need-to-know information only. Which means that the details of all the animals and birds found in God's Promised Land are not irrelevant to our Jewish experience. On the contrary, each and every aspect of our cherished country, including the fauna with whom the Jewish nation coexists there, is important, and even crucial to our overall experience as Jews.

Indeed, these aspects of Eretz Yisrael are so important that the Torah includes them for us to study and get to know. And truthfully, there is no better place to get to know them than at the Biblical Museum of Natural History, and no better teacher to inform us of them than Rabbi Dr. Natan Slifkin.

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom, and a great week ahead,

Rabbi Pini Dunner





Sisterhood Corner

April

Happy Yom HaAtzmaut!

Join us in celebrating by watching the fascinating documentary

Israel Inside - How a Small Nation Makes a Big Difference.

The film will be streamed on Thursday April 15th at 7:30pm.

To view the film head to

www.beverlyhillssynagogue.org/israelinside

Yom HaAtzmaut Sameach

Chodesh Iyar Tov

&

Shabbat Shalom,

Cecile & Ruthie

Sisterhood Co-Presidents



Sara Tanenbaum

Sara Henya bat Moshe a"h

Mother of

Bart Tannenbaum

Yahrtzeit - 28 Nissan

Irving Glatter

Yitzhak ben Dov Berr z"l

Father of

Lillian Fuchs

Grandfather of

Jason Fuchs

Yahrtzeit - 29 Nissan

Esther Rubinstein

Esther Bat Mordechai Yaakov a"h

Mother of

Simon Rubinstein

Yahrtzeit - 29 Nissan

Penina Gaba

Penina bat Yitzchok a"h

Mother of

Ruth Gaba

Yahrtzeit - 2 Iyar

Alvin Doppelt

Yitzhak ben Shmuel z"l

Father of

Julie Boyer

Yahrtzeit - 3 Iyar

Enid West

Shoshana Bat Yoseph a"h

Mother of

Allison Sostchen

Yahrtzeit - 4 Iyar



Brigitte Silkin

Diba Mostadim

Gary Dordick

Grace Zucker

Mark Zucker

Michael Novack

Philip Kaufler

Rachel Gindi

Robin Broidy

Sharon Weiner

Susy Rubinstein

THANK YOU

Steve & Vivian Dorfman

for sponsoring both kiddushes on the last days of Pesach in memory of Steve's father,

Alex Dorfman

Tzvi ben David Hacoheh z"l whose yahrtzeit is on the 26th of Nissan.

THANK YOU

Rabbi Yehuda & Simi Feigen

for sponsoring Rabbi Dunner's weekly D'var Torah video in memory of Rabbi Yehuda's father, **Rabbi Alter Yosef Feigen, Reb Alter Yosef ben HaRav Menachem Mendel z"l**, whose yahrtzeit is on the 26th of Nissan.

The video is posted on our Facebook & Instagram page.

Thank You

Aaron & Lillian and Jason Fuchs for sponsoring this week's Parsha Shiur in memory of Lillians's father and Jason's grandfather, **Irving Glatter**

Yitzchak ben Dov Ber z"l whose yahrtzeit is on 29 Nissan.



Thank you to those who joined us for Seders at the Shul



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ISRAEL inside

HOW A SMALL NATION MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

Celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut

*"...a poignant and inspiring
look inside Israeli society.
A must-see."*

Natan Sharansky
Author, Human Rights Activist



Join us on Thursday April 15th at 7:30pm to
watch this incredible film
www.beverlyhillssynagogue.org/israelinside



SAVE THE DATE

**YINBH
GALA BANQUET**

A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

marking the full re-opening of the
synagogue and resilience of our
community over the past year

**WEDNESDAY
JUNE 16**

IN PERSON & VIRTUAL
More details coming soon