



Tefilla Notebook

1 Iyyar • Parshat Tazria-Metzora • Rosh Chodesh

April 24-25, 2020

Stephen Rothman, President • Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi • Nati Bar-Am, Chazan

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SHABBAT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, APRIL 24

7:14pm CANDLELIGHTING

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

8:13pm SHABBAT ENDS

Guidelines for Praying at home:

When davening at home, it is best to daven at the same time that you would have davened when in shul. Although you cannot *hear* the krias Hatorah, you should still read the torah portion and haftorah aloud, using the tunes if you know them.

Stone(Artsroll)

Tazria-Metzora (Lev. 12:1 - 15:33) -- pp.608-635

Rosh Chodesh (Num. 28:11-15) -- pp. 890-893

Haftora Rosh Chodesh (Isa. 66:1-24) -- pp. 1208-1210

Dearest Members and Friends,

We live in dystopian times. As Benjamin Franklin once said, "I wake up every morning at nine and grab for the morning paper. Then I look at the obituary page. If my name is not on it, I get up." Perhaps the only difference is that today he would have told us he Google-searched himself on his smartphone. Franklin also famously said, "in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." Right now I would say that taxes comes a distant second.



For his day, Franklin lived to a ripe old age, dying at 84. During his extended and very active lifetime he had played a crucial role in a diverse spectrum of fields, including politics, diplomacy, science, invention and philosophy. Truthfully, he must have read an awful lot of obituaries, and it is likely he wrote quite a few as well – he always quipped that he would write his own epitaph. As a Founding Father one must assume his obituary was written by others long before he died, and he probably outlived most of them. When Fidel Castro died in 2016, after having spent several years in the shadows, newspapers reported that the nonagenarian dictator of Cuba had outlived many of his obituary writers, some of them by two decades!

In our pampered, privileged, pre-COVID world, thoughts about our own mortality, if they existed at all, were either distant and remote, or therapized away as unnecessary sources of anxiety. Indeed, there is an entire branch of psychology known as "terror management theory" which offers insights and mitigations for "defensive human thinking and behavior that stems from an awareness and fear of death."

Apparently, and rather ironically, in an attempt to deny our own mortality, we end up adopting worldviews that we think will protect our self-esteem, allowing us to believe that we play a very significant role in a meaningful world. Sometimes, or so the theory goes, this can result in course racism based on an overinflated opinion of the importance of one's own cultural or national group. It can also lead to people taking ridiculous personal risks or engaging in ludicrous self-promotion – all as part of a twisted attempt to somehow live on beyond one's own lifetime.

This TMT theory builds on the premise proposed by Ernest Becker's 1974 Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Denial of Death*. Becker, a child of Jewish immigrants to the US who took part in the liberation of a Nazi concentration camp, was utterly gripped by the futility of life in the face of inevitable death. In his book, he argued that everything which makes up human civilization is nothing but an elaborate defense mechanism against the knowledge that we are going to die – a sophisticated survival technique that enables individuals and groups to keep going despite life's ultimate pointlessness.

But there are times when all of us are forced to come face-to-face with the truth of human frailty, usually through personal sickness or the death of a close family member or friend. Since the dawn of human history, humanity has developed rituals and customs to help us through these times. The ancient Egyptians created intricate, often extravagant death chambers for their departed, and every culture since then has faced up to death via carefully choreographed and scripted reactions, essentially distracting themselves from the fact that whoever it was who died is actually them, even if it didn't happen to them yet.

Without wishing to be accused of parochial exceptionalism, I have always been very taken by an anomalous ritual in Judaism, no longer practiced, that is recorded in the Torah at the beginning of Tazria with regard to a woman who has just given birth. If it is a son, she is "ritually unclean for seven days," and must then wait another thirty-three days before coming into contact with anything holy or visiting the Temple. If the newborn baby is a girl, these time periods are doubled – the mother is ritually impure for two weeks and then has to wait sixty-six days. At the end of it all, she must bring two "penitence" offerings at the Temple.

The commentaries all puzzle over the fact that such a negative ritual is associated with newborns. Surely a happy lifecycle event – the birth of a child – should not be burdened by social isolation and implied disapproval. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks sums up one well-known view regarding this Torah-mandated reaction to childbirth as follows: "birth, like death, is a signal of mortality, which has no place in the Temple, the space set aside for consciousness of eternity and spirituality." In other words, the first moments of a child's life are coupled by the certainty of their ultimate death, and this is doubly so for a baby girl, who will one day give birth herself.

The anomaly, for me, is the fact that an acknowledgement of human mortality is so intimately bound up by Judaism with what we, as human beings, see as the ultimate example of renewed life, and as the promise of a future for us and for humanity as a whole. But these past few weeks have caused me to reflect, and I think there is a message here. The instinctive denial of our own mortality – a phenomenon that is particularly pronounced with the birth of a child – is not really a curse, it is a blessing. While the Talmud teaches us that one must repent each day as if it is one's last (Avot 2:15), we are simultaneously compelled to celebrate life. Even in the midst of the laws regarding the mother of a newborn, we are instructed to circumcise a son, and bring him into the covenant of God. What would be the point of this if life is not worth living, and is just a drawn-out death process?

Never has the world – the whole, entire population of the world – had to collectively and individually face its own mortality as we all have over the past couple of months. I have run out of synonyms for unprecedented – so I will just say that it's unprecedented. And yet, we have all come up with new rituals and methods to deal with life – we have started using technology that we've never used before to stay in touch with each other, and to learn; we have begun exercising in new ways; we are bonding with our spouses, children, siblings, and parents; we are trying out new recipes; and most importantly of all – we are trying to stay cheerful, even as we turn to the obituaries page hoping that we're not in them.

Perhaps the ultimate victory of life over death is the celebration of life even as "darkness falls across the land [and] the midnight hour is close at hand." And no, that's not a Benjamin Franklin quote – it's the disembodied voice of Vincent Price at the end of Michael Jackson's smash-hit song, *Thriller*.

Praying for your safety and health, and for only good news, with God's help. Shabbat Shalom!

Pini Dunner

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

During this time of mandated social distancing, we are still keeping our community connection.

Connect with our Whatsapp Groups



- ◇ [YINBH Community](#)
- ◇ [Daily 5-minute parsha thought](#)
- ◇ [Daily Daf Yomi Shiur](#)
- ◇ [Parsha Shiurim](#)
- ◇ [YINBH Videos](#)

MAZAL TOV

Michael & Tova Zaghi on the birth of a baby boy.
Mazal Tov to big siblings Benyamin Yaron and Rona Zamira.



Sisterhood Corner APRIL

We are grateful to Rabbi Dunner, Sabine Dunner, Chazzan Nati Baram, & Carmit Baram for keeping our community together.

We hope you are staying healthy, safe, & positive.

Shabbat Shalom,
Cecile & Ruthie
Sisterhood Co-Presidents



Uri Dunner
Noah Swartz
Laurie Spencer
Natalie Sudar
Molly Boyer
Elana Zeligman
Maryjo Schnitzer

YAHRTZEITS

Penina Gaba
Penina bat Yitzchok a”h
Mother of
Ruth Gaba
Yahrtzeit— 2 Iyyar

Alvin Doppelt
Yitzchak ben Shmuel z”l
Father of
Julie Boyer
Yahrtzeit— 3 Iyyar

Enid West
Mother of
Allison Sostchen
Yahrtzeit— 4 Iyyar

Samuel Garshofsky
Shmuel ben Chaim Elizer
z”l
Father of
Larry Garshofsky
Yahrtzeit— 6 Iyyar

Nisen Ganz
Nisen ben Sholom z”l
Father of
Tuvia Ganz
Yahrtzeit— 7 Iyyar

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

**Mincha/Maariv including
sefirat haomer**

Praying Together
Weekdays at 7:20pm
via Zoom

This does not count as a minyan

Meeting ID
226-829-899

SPONSOR A CLASS



Honor the memory of a loved one, or celebrate a simcha by sponsoring one of our zoom classes. We will mention the sponsorship beforehand and in any class materials.

If interested, email mkramer@yinh.org

Let's Pray Together

Mincha & Kabbalat Shabbat on ZOOM

Friday, April 24th at 6pm

**Join in with the community
for Erev Shabbos prayers
led by Chazzan Nati Baram**



Candle lighting
7:14pm

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/3102767650>
Meeting ID: 310 276 7650

Join us again Motzei Shabbos for Havdalah at 8:35pm



CLASS SCHEDULE - WEEK OF APRIL 26 - MAY 2
THE ZOOM CODE FOR ALL CLASSES ARE 310 276 7650

The log-in link is <https://zoom.us/j/3102767650>

DATE	TIME	TOPIC	CATEGORY
Sunday April 26	8:00pm	Tzurva MeRabanan with Chazzan Nati Baram	Class
Monday April 27	12:00pm	Yom Ha'atzmaut Series with Chazzan Nati Baram	Class
Tuesday April 28	12:00pm	Tanach Shiur with Chazzan Nati Baram	Class
Wednesday April 29	5:00pm	Live Viewing of the YINBH Yom Ha'atzmaut Video	Video
Wednesday April 29	10:00am	Parsha Shiur with Rabbi Pini Dunner	Class
Thursday April 30	10:00am	Class with Chazzan Nati Baram	Class
Thursday April 30	5:00pm	Pirkei Avot with Rabbi Pini Dunner	Class
Friday May 1	6:00pm	Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	Tefilla
Saturday May 2	8:40pm	Havdalah	Tefilla

CALENDAR FOR COUNTING THE OMER
COUNT IN THE EVENING AT OR AFTER MAARIV

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				APRIL 9 COUNT 1	APRIL 10 COUNT 2	APRIL 11 COUNT 3
APRIL 12 COUNT 4	APRIL 13 COUNT 5	APRIL 14 COUNT 6	APRIL 15 COUNT 7	APRIL 16 COUNT 8	APRIL 17 COUNT 9	APRIL 18 COUNT 10
APRIL 19 COUNT 11	APRIL 20 COUNT 12	APRIL 21 COUNT 13	APRIL 22 COUNT 14	APRIL 23 COUNT 15	APRIL 24 COUNT 16	APRIL 25 COUNT 17
APRIL 26 COUNT 18	APRIL 27 COUNT 19	APRIL 28 COUNT 20	APRIL 29 COUNT 21	APRIL 30 COUNT 22	MAY 1 COUNT 23	MAY 2 COUNT 24
MAY 3 COUNT 25	MAY 4 COUNT 26	MAY 5 COUNT 27	MAY 6 COUNT 28	MAY 7 COUNT 29	MAY 8 COUNT 30	MAY 9 COUNT 31
MAY 10 COUNT 32	MAY 11 COUNT 33	MAY 12 COUNT 34	MAY 13 COUNT 35	MAY 14 COUNT 36	MAY 15 COUNT 37	MAY 16 COUNT 38
MAY 17 COUNT 39	MAY 18 COUNT 40	MAY 19 COUNT 41	MAY 20 COUNT 42	MAY 21 COUNT 43	MAY 22 COUNT 44	MAY 23 COUNT 45
MAY 24 COUNT 46	MAY 25 COUNT 47	MAY 26 COUNT 48	MAY 27 COUNT 49			



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YOM HA'ATZMAUT



72ND

Virtual Celebration

5780

Tekes Maavar & Tefilla Chagigit

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

7:00^{PM} Yom Hazikaron Program & Tekes Maavar

7:30^{PM} Yom Ha'atzmaut Program and Tefilla Chagigit

To Watch or Join Via Zoom, visit www.bneiakivala.org/yh5780

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Sponsorship Opportunities available.

Please contact Avi Matanky at amatanky@bneiakivala.org for more information.