

Tefilla Notebook

16 Tammuz • Parshat Balak

June 25-26, 2021

Steven Dorfman, President

Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi

Nati Bar-Am, Chazan

310-276-7650 • office@yinh.org

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY JUNE 25TH

CANDLELIGHTING 7:50pm

FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES 6:30pm

SATURDAY, JUNE 26TH

GEMARA SHIUR: 8:30AM

SHACHARIT 9:15AM

MINCHA 8:00PM

MAARIV 8:50pm

SHABBAT ENDS 8:53pm

WEEKDAY DAVENING TIMES

SUN 8:00AM & 7:55PM

MON - THURS 7:00AM & 7:55PM

FRI 7:00AM & 6:30PM

17th of Tammuz on Sunday

Fast Begins 4:12am, Fast Ends 8:48pm

Dear Members & Friends,

This week marks 10 years since the passing of my dear father, Avraham Moshe ben Yosef Tzvi HaLevi z"l, at the age of 73. Known universally as "Aba" Dunner, his last few years were marked by debilitating sickness and various personal tragedies. But notwithstanding every challenge that came his way, until the final weeks of his life no hurdle seemed to hold him back, and his incredible workload of communal activism and involvement in a dazzling array of activities continued almost uninterrupted.

A week ago, my father's second wife Charlotte – who took such good care of him during his last years – initiated a WhatsApp group of his family, friends and admirers, and asked us to share photos and stories, and to reflect on my father's life now that 10 years have elapsed since he passed.

The range of photos and messages has been heartwarming. My father was a larger-than-life character who touched the lives of thousands of people, often in ways he was probably unaware of. One particular message on the group, from a woman who lived near him in London, is a perfect example: "One Yom Kippur I was walking to shul with my children, and we met Aba on the corner of our road. We stopped to wish each other Good Yomtov, and I randomly told him that it was my daughter's birthday that day. He enquired how old she was, and on hearing that she was 5, bent down and shook her hand very formally, to wish her a proper happy birthday."

I absolutely love that story. It was Yom Kippur, when we all have other things on our minds, but my father's sensitivity towards a little child – who was likely upset that her birthday celebrations had been supplanted by a religious holiday, and Yom Kippur to boot – took precedence over any other concerns. And his birthday greeting to her that day clearly made a strong impression. Decades later she and her mother can still clearly remember his thoughtfulness. As my father's lifelong friend, Rabbi Dovid Refson, explained to the group, "Aba had the ability to truly empathize with everyone he met, to get into their heads, and to feel their pain and their joy."

But my father did not just excel at microlevel one-on-one interactions – he was utterly unique in his macrolevel work for Jewish communities at home and abroad. He personally arranged for the construction of dozens of mikvahs in former Eastern Bloc countries after Jewish community life revived in those countries post-1990. He hired rabbis; arranged for their salaries; founded schools, yeshivas, seminaries, and kollels; reopened synagogues that had remained shut for years; protected cemeteries from desecration; negotiated with local governments and national governments to ensure that Jewish community life could thrive in every conceivable European country – from Bulgaria to Portugal, and from Kazakhstan to Sweden. And all of this was just in the last 20 years of his life.

No task was too insignificant, and no project was too overwhelming. More often than not my father would use his legendary charm and spirited humor to get things done – but when all else failed, he would fearlessly challenge those who stood in his way. As his colleague, Rabbi Moshe Lebel of the Conference of European Rabbis, put it: "Aba would always lighten the atmosphere with his quick wit, but I was amazed that when we visited leading rabbis of the Jewish world, or when the traditional interpretation of Jewish law was being debated, he could roar like a lion for the Torah truth."

What I remember most about my father is his devoted love and support for his family, his insatiable curiosity, and his boundless energy and industry. His days started very early in the morning and continued late into the night. He traveled constantly, always taking the earliest flights out and the latest flights back, so that he could pack in as much work as possible wherever he was going. His list of achievements over his five decades of working life would have exhausted a dozen active people, and yet he was forever ready to take on something new, or to help someone else. Most impressive of all was the fact that he wore his heavy work schedule so lightly, and always had time for a schmooze, or to share a joke or an amusing anecdote. I constantly marveled at the fact that he was always ready for action – long after those alongside him had flagged and were ready to call it a day.

There is a verse in Parshat Balak open to dual interpretation that perfectly lends itself to this unique aspect of my father's personality. In the midst of his curses-turned-blessings, the gentile prophet Balaam offers the following observation about God's view of his chosen nation (Num. 23:21): **לֹא הָבִיט אֱלֹהִים בְּעֵינָיו וְלֹא רָאָה עֲמָל בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל** - "He perceives no iniquity in Jacob, and sees no perversity in Israel."

The Hebrew word for perversity is Amal, which can also be translated as "toil". In his message to the WhatsApp group about my late father, Rabbi Refson noted a characteristic which was utterly exceptional – he was determined "to find the positive in everyone he encountered and to find ways of assisting them in whatever way they felt was necessary." We all know only too well that when we desire something, and are consumed by that desire, nothing can stop us in our pursuit of getting what we want. Perhaps this explains Balaam's prophecy, using the alternative translation of Amal: if one perceives no iniquity in our fellow Jacob, and our only desire is to find ways of assisting them and achieving their needs, then no amount of work that we do for them will ever be considered toil or could tire us out.

My late father's life is an example to all of us of what one person can achieve in the short years we are given to do the kinds of things that make life more than just a daily grind. And the more we do for others with good cheer and by seeing the good in them, the more we will be able to achieve overall. The proof of Balaam's prophecy is right there, in the story of my father's incredible life. May his memory be a blessing.

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



**MAZAL TOV
GAVRIEL HAZANI
ON YOUR
BAR MITZVAH!**

THANK YOU TO THIS WEEK'S KIDDUSH SPONSORS:

Rabbi Pini & Sabine Dunner in memory of Rabbi Dunner's father, **Rav Aba Dunner, Rav Avraham Moshe ben HaRav Yosef Tzvi HaLevi z"l**, whose 10th yahrtzeit is on 15 Tammuz

David & Gloria Frankel in memory of David's father, **Naftali Tzvi ben Chaim Yaakov z"l**, whose yarthzet is on 17 Tammuz

Golan Eliahoo and Siporah Sadighian (our newest members) for their Sheva Brachot

and in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of **Gavriel Hazani**

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Sepideh Siporah Sadighian & Payam Golan Eliahoo



Sisterhood Corner

Keep Calm and Read On!
Rabbi Dunner will be in
conversation with
Author Gil Troy
**Tuesday, July 13th at
7:30pm**
Email office@yinh.org
for registration and full
details!

Shabbat Shalom,
Cecile & Ruthie
Sisterhood Co-Presidents



Daniel Teboul	Nasrin Mostadim
Noah Kest	Tziporah Thompson
Rachel Kessler	Denise Richter
Irina Schaeffer	Howard Feldberg
Michele Silver	Joshua Zeller
Sienna Teboul	Aliza Rosenstein
Raquel Garshofsky	Joe Samuel

Happy Anniversary

Alan & Judi Fogelman
Adam & Jesse Shaked
Moshe & Helen Sassover
Mark & Jennifer Smith



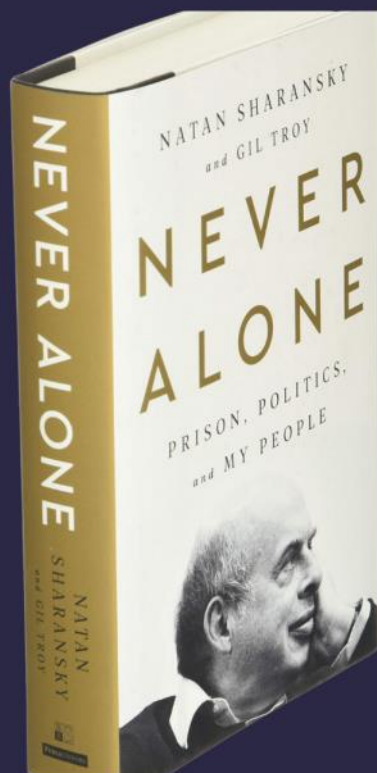
YAHRTZEITS

Anita Bernstein
Hinda a"h
Mother of
Barbara Bernstein
Yahrtzeit - 17 Tammuz

Frances Schloss
Freida Ada bat Yechetzkel
Pesach a"h
Wife of
Stephen Schloss
Yahrtzeit - 16 Tammuz

Dovid Oved Sochaczewski
Dovid Oved ben Dov z"l
Father of
Jaime Sohacheski
Yahrtzeit - 22 Tammuz

Naftali Tzvi Frankel
Naftali Tzvi ben Chaim Yaakov z"l
Father of
David Frankel
Yahrtzeit - 17 Tammuz



**SAVE THE
DATE!**

JULY 13th, 2021

AT 7:30PM (PST)
MEN & WOMEN
WELCOME

Order now on
amazon

YINBH BOOK GROUP

JOIN SISTERHOOD ON JULY 13TH, 2021
FOR OUR FIRST BOOK SELECTION
NEVER ALONE PRISON, POLITICS, AND MY PEOPLE
A RECENT MEMOIR OF NATAN SHARANSKY.

WE WILL BE IN CONVERSATION WITH
CO-AUTHOR AND DISTINGUISHED HISTORIAN
Gil Troy

\$18 Suggested donation
MEETING DETAILS TO FOLLOW!
Email Office@yinh.org to register

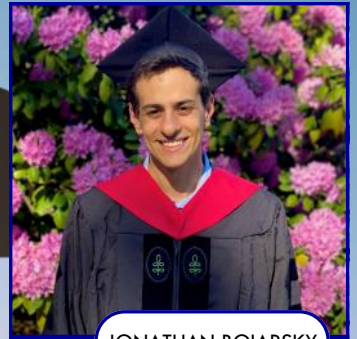
"You don't have to be famous. You just have to make your mother and father proud of you, and you already have."

—Meryl Streep

MAZAL TOV

CLASS OF

2021



JONATHAN BOIARSKY

Jonathan graduated from Harvard Medical School and will be attending UCLA for residency. He is the son-in-law of Barry Novack and Dr. Annie Baum. He is married to Danielle Novack.



EZRA BOYER

Ezra graduated from Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy and will be going to YULA next year. He is the son of Jonathan and Julie Boyer.



NOA BRENNER

Noa graduated from Beverly Hills High School. She will attend the Pforzheimer Honors College at Pace University in NYC. Noa is the granddaughter of Dr. William and June Brenner.



SHOSHANA DAI

Our Synagogue member, Shoshana Dai graduated from UCLA with a Masters in Science in Nursing. She is an Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner.



ELI DUNNER

Eli graduated from Bellevue University with a Bachelors in Business. He is the son of Rabbi Pini and Sabine Dunner.



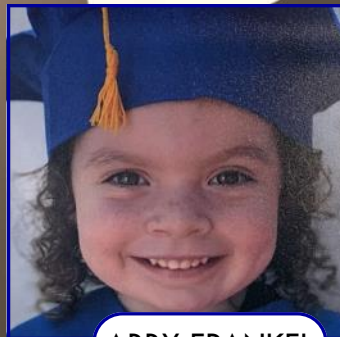
TYLER FIALKOV

Tyler graduated from Gindi Maimonides Academy. He is the son of Howie and Shirin Fialkov.



ELIANA FINE

Eliana graduated from Stony Brook Medical School. She will begin her residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Stony Brook. She is the granddaughter of Dr. Richard and Shawney Fine.



ABBY FRANKEL

Abby graduated from Gan Karina. She will go on to kindergarten at Harkham Hillel Academy. She is the granddaughter of Rabbi Alan and Sandy Kalinsky.



LEAH GORDON

Leah graduated from Bais Yaakov High School. She is the granddaughter of Chavi Hertz and daughter of Rabbi Yisroel and Sandy Gordon.





BENJAMIN GRABEL

Benjamin graduated from Pre-Kindergarten at Gan Karina. He will go on to Kindergarten at Gindi Maimonides Academy next year. He is the grandson of Dr. Ed and Cecile Gromis.



SIMON GRABEL

Simon graduated from Pre-1 at the Gindi Maimonides Academy. He will continue on to grade 1 at Gindi Maimonides Elementary School. He is the grandson of Dr. Ed and Cecile Gromis.



JONATHAN GROMIS

Jonathan graduated from his Radiology Residency Program at Mount Sinai Hospital in NYC. He was also Chief Resident. He will continue his training in a Diagnostic Radiology Fellowship at NYU's Grossman School of Medicine. He is the son of Dr. Ed and Cecile Gromis.



JONATHAN HAZANI

Jonathan graduated from YULA Boys School. He is the son of Michele Hazani.



CHANA MALKA HERTZ

Chana Malka graduated from Torah Emes Elementary School. She is the granddaughter of Chavi Hertz and daughter of Zevi and Liba Hertz.



GOLDA HERTZ

Golda graduated from Torah Emes Elementary School. She is the granddaughter of Chavi Hertz and the daughter of Yitzi and Jael Hertz.



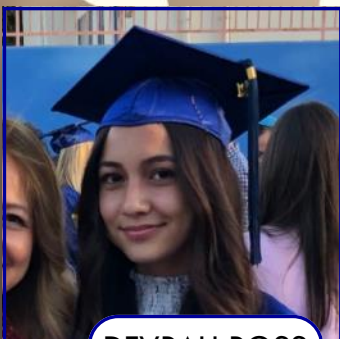
LILA KESSLER

Lila graduated from Harkham Hillel Academy as valedictorian of her class. She is the granddaughter of Jonathan and Faye Kellerman and daughter of Jonathan and Rachel Kessler.



ELIANA TEHILA PRERO

Eliana graduated from Yavneh Hebrew Academy. She will be attending YULA for High School. She is the granddaughter of Hillel and Ruthie Kellerman and daughter of Dr. Dovi and Naomi Prero.



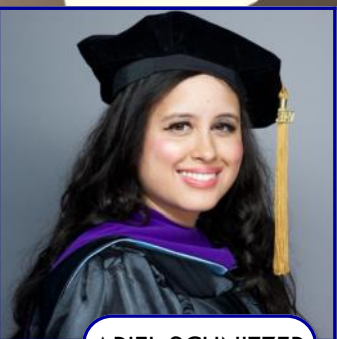
DEVRAH ROSS

Devrah graduated from Harkham Hillel Academy and will be going to Shalhevet High School next year. She is the daughter of David and Leah Ross.



AIDEN SAMUEL

Aiden graduated from 6th grade at Braverman Elementary School. He is the grandson of Joe and Galina Samuel.



ARIEL SCHNITZER

Ariel graduated from Cordozo law school with a J.D. She has a clerkship with the Essex County Superior Court Family Division. She is the daughter of Avrumie and MaryJo Schnitzer.



IZZY SLOMNICKI

Izzy graduated from Kindergarten at HANC. He is the grandson of Rabbi Alan and Sandy Kalinsky.