

# Tefilla Notebook

8 Av • Parshat Devarim

July 16-17, 2021

Steven Dorfman, President

Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi

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## SHABBAT & TISHA B'AV SCHEDULE

### FRIDAY JULY 16

CANDLELIGHTING 7:46pm

FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES 6:30pm

### SATURDAY, JULY 17

GEMARA SHIUR 8:30AM

SHACHARIT 9:15AM

MINCHA 6:00pm

There is no communal Seudah Shlishit  
*Since the fast begins on a Shabbat, the traditional Seudah Mafseket is not eaten, just eat a regular seudah shlishit as you would on a normal shabbat.*

FAST BEGINS: 8:03pm

SHABBAT ENDS 8:49pm

*After Shabbat goes out say "Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'Chol" and replace your shoes with non-leather shoes. Sit on a low chair.*

MAARIV 9:00pm

*Followed by Megillat Eicha*

### SUNDAY, JULY 18

SHACHARIT/KINOT 8:00AM

*No Tallis and Tefillin*

CHATZOT 12:59PM

FILM SCREENING: 6:00PM

MINCHA with tefillin and leining 7:45PM

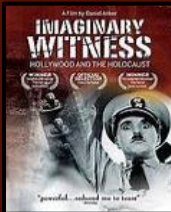
*Followed by Maariv and Havdalah*

FAST ENDS 8:43pm

Sunday, July 18th  
6pm Film Screening  
in Social Hall for  
Tisha B'Av

**Imaginary  
Witness:  
Hollywood and  
the Holocaust**

*This film shows history of  
Hollywood's handling of the  
Nazis and its later depiction of  
the Holocaust they perpetrated.*



## THANK YOU

**Rabbi Baruch Sufrin for being our  
baal koreh this Shabbat**

## WEEKDAY DAVENING TIMES

MON – THUR 7:00AM & 7:45PM

FRI 7:00AM & 6:30PM

Dear Members & Friends,

One of the most startling narratives of the Talmud concerns Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, the rabbinic leader of Jerusalem's Jews during the devastating Roman siege of Jerusalem – a siege that ultimately resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem's Temple in 70 C.E. (Gittin 56a-b).

Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai attempts to bring the extremist "zealot" faction under control, pleading with them to reach a compromise with the Roman enemy so that they survive and the temple remains standing, but they summarily reject his appeals. Amidst ever-worsening circumstances for Jerusalem's inhabitants – much of it precipitated by the zealots in order to force a military confrontation, and with no realistically attainable respite on the horizon, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai seeks advice on how to escape the city from his nephew Abba Sikra, leader of one of the insurgent factions.

I have always found it bewildering that Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, the paradigm of levelheaded leadership, had a nephew who was irretrievably ensconced at the center of one of the most violent militias of Jewish history and who claimed to be unable to pacify his compatriots, but who was nonetheless willing to help his uncle commit an act of treachery, advising him to feign illness and "die" so that he could exit the city gates inside a coffin. But that's what Abba Sikra did, going as far as protecting his uncle from having his body impaled by swords on the way out of the city, telling his fellow-brigands that it would look terrible if they mutilated the body of their own revered leader.

Abba Sikra's fate after his duplicity remains unrecorded, but we are informed that his very-much-alive uncle emerged from the coffin and quickly gained an audience with the Roman army's supreme commander, Vespasian. After addressing him as the Emperor of Rome, a position to which Vespasian had not yet been appointed – at least to his knowledge, a messenger promptly arrived informing the general of his elevation to the leadership of Rome's vast empire. Suitably impressed with the great rabbi's prophetic powers, Vespasian granted him three wishes – and it is fair to say that the realization of two of them totally changed the course of Jewish history.

Grasping that it would be pointless to ask for Jerusalem and its inhabitants to be spared after they had conducted a multiyear bloody war against the forces of Rome, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai instead asked for the leadership family of Rabban Gamliel, a descendant of the great Hillel, to be given their lives and freedom, and for the coastal city of Yavneh (Jamnia) to be established as a center of rabbinic Judaism, so that the Jewish faith would survive the inevitable catastrophe of the destruction of its central shrine. This practical foresight ensured continuity and provided a workable solution, a demonstration of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai's wisdom that was equally matched by his precognition of the looming tragedy – a tragedy he had so valiantly attempted, but failed, to avert.

All these details are remarkable enough in-and-of-themselves, but undoubtedly the most extraordinary aspect of the story is that Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai had concluded that his own community – the very community he had grown up in and led for years – had sunk into an abyss of wanton self-destruction. And while he was powerless to ameliorate the situation of those trapped by the zealot leadership's intransigence, including his own nephew, he realized that at the very least he could preserve the values and traditions of his beloved heritage by finding a compromise that would dovetail with the realities of the time so that any survivors would have a future – and that is what he bravely did.

Drawing parallels from history to help us understand or resolve current crises is always a fraught path, prone to whimsical wishful thinking. But at the same time the study of history is pointless if we don't take on board that plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose – namely, the human condition doesn't change, and history has a tendency to repeat itself – even if never entirely identically.

My point is this: once again, as in ancient history, the Jews of Israel who most visibly and by their lifestyle represent the strictest application of our faith have painted themselves into a knotty corner. And when faced with increasing threats to their Israeli-government funded status quo – as was the case last week when incoming Israeli Finance Minister, Avigdor Liberman, ended yeshiva and kollel learners' childcare subsidies – instead of looking for a compromise, the Haredi sector always seem to double down. In this latest situation, United Torah Judaism's party leader Moshe Gafni called Liberman an "evil man", while the Shas party leader Arye Deri described Liberman's decision as "wicked".

For many years the Haredi political parties have been government kingmakers – crucial to the cobbling together of fragile right-leaning coalitions, even though strictly speaking they do not support the Zionist enterprise, nor do they wish to be officially identified with the State of Israel. And while in the early years of the state they were a beleaguered minority, struggling to reestablish themselves after the Holocaust while battling the hostility of secular Zionists, today, with well over a million Haredim in Israel, they represent 12.6% of the total population of Israel.

In 2009 Haredim under the age of 20 represented 16.3% of that population demographic – 29% in terms of Israel's Jewish demographic – and that was 12 years ago.

Although wholesale non-participation in the civic activities State of Israel may have made sense for the Haredi community during those early years, today it is leading inexorably towards an economic drain on Israel that could affect Israel's overall success. It is also causing incredible resentment among non-Haredi citizens, and may ultimately be the foundation of future security issues if Haredim continue to grow in numbers whilst collectively rejecting army service. (Continued on page 2)



(Continued)

If there's one lesson we should learn from the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash almost 2,000 years ago, and the revealing story of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, it is that Jerusalem and the temple's destruction were avoidable if only the zealots had seen things differently and acted reasonably. And imagine this: our temple could still be standing today if the squabbling and inflexible faithful – who all no doubt believed fervently that what they were doing was for God's glory and the greater good – would have understood that the sands had unalterably shifted. While Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai was ensuring the future of the very Judaism they assumed they were protecting, this group was simultaneously guilty of wanton self-annihilation which resulted in their temple – our temple! – burning and crumbling to the ground. And just to be clear – the State of Israel is not a Roman military siege intent on subduing Haredim, or worse. On the contrary, all the non-Haredi leaders and citizens of Israel I have ever met over the years seem fully prepared to do what they need to do to accommodate their Haredi brothers and sisters, as long as they actively participate in the incredible miracle of renewed Jewish control in the Promised Land. Truthfully, it is not too late to turn the tide and to ensure the thriving existence of Haredim as full partners in the State of Israel, so that they avoid the extraordinary pain and pointless struggles they seem destined to face. All that is needed for that to happen is for those within the Haredi system who yearn to remove the shackles imposed on them by others to accept the example set by the Temple-era rabbinic luminary, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, so that they don't get trapped like Abba Sikra, who felt unable to stand up to his fellow zealots. Tragically, nobody listened to Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai then, and it turned out a disaster. But if they listen to him today the outcome could be different. I pray that those who cherish his memory heed his wise words, and in that merit may the temple be rebuilt, speedily and in our days, Amen.

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

## Sisterhood Corner

July

Many thanks to Sisterhood, our special YINBH staff, Madeline, Carly, and Darryl, and all who participated in making our first book group a success! A special thank you to Rabbi Dunner for his thought-provoking interview with author Gil Troy.

We are currently selecting our next book, please email book suggestions to [cecile@gromisequities.com](mailto:cecile@gromisequities.com)!

Mark your calendar!

High Holy Days Discovery Concert  
Wednesday, August 25<sup>th</sup> at 7pm

Save the dates!

YINBH UAE Tour

October 21<sup>st</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>

For more information visit

[www.beverlyhillssynagogue.org/dubai](http://www.beverlyhillssynagogue.org/dubai)

Wishing everyone an easy and meaningful fast.

Shabbat Shalom,

Cecile & Ruthie

Sisterhood Co-Presidents

## YAHRTZEITS

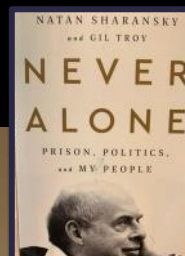
**Sylvia Varon**  
Sara bat Yehoshua a"h  
Mother of  
**Sam Varon**  
Yahrtzeit - 12 Av



*Oliver Azouz*  
*Henry Novack*  
*Max Spencer*  
*Sandy Kalinsky*  
*Elliot Broidy*  
*Gina Raphael*  
*Arnold Schlesinger*  
*Gae Kam*  
*Emmanuelle Hodara*  
*Julia Baum*  
*Ilana Stoll*  
*Bruce Schloss*  
*Joan Lopatin*  
*Jaron Wallack*

**SAVE THE DATE**  
High Holy Days  
Discovery Concert  
**August 25th at 7pm**  
GET INSPIRED BY THE MUSIC, MELODIES  
AND PRAYERS OF THE YAMIM NORAIM

Book Group Meeting  
On Tuesday, July 13th  
Dialogue with Author  
Gil Troy and Rabbi Pini Dunner





Last week, we hosted a small private lunch with three Native American leaders from the Tongva, Inupiat, and Cherokee tribes. They all spoke to us about their rich history and culture which, similar to our own history, involved genocides and forced relocation. Their visit was motivated by their desire to show solidarity with the Jewish community in the wake of the recent increased antisemitism, and to show their support for the Jewish nation's rights in our own indigenous country, the Land of Israel. The land where our Synagogue stands is native Tongva land, and Rabbi Dunner acknowledged this historical fact when he welcomed the leaders to our shul. With thanks to "Indigenous Bridges" and "StandWithUs" for organizing this fascinating and moving ceremony. We look forward to enriching our relationship with the Native American community and meeting again soon. As part of the visit, we exchanged gifts, in a ritual known as a "protocol ceremony". We also heard a rendition of Native American music.



Last month, the head of United Hatzalah, Eli Beer, came to our Synagogue following the horrible tragedy in Mt. Meron on Lag B'Omer. After hearing about the lifesaving efforts of Hatzalah over those fateful few hours, members of our Synagogue generously pledged to replace all the hospital grade heart defibrillators that had gone missing or had been broken in the chaos, and we also raised enough money for two new ambucycles. On his recent trip to Israel, Rabbi Dunner and his family visited United Hatzalah Headquarters in Jerusalem to see the dispatch team in action, and to see the newly dedicated ambucycles and defibrillators donated by our members. Thank you to all those who contributed so generously.





# YINBH DUBAI MISSION

OCTOBER 21-31, 2021



Optional extension to  
Jerusalem for Shabbat  
at the King David Hotel

- 5-STAR GOURMET CUISINE
- LUXURY ROOM & SUITE  
OPTIONS
- FANTASTIC PROGRAM
- HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS

Special Guest  
David Freidman



## SPACE IS LIMITED - RESERVE NOW

For more info goto  
[www.beverlyhillssynagogue.org/dubai](http://www.beverlyhillssynagogue.org/dubai)

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