



# Tefilla Notebook

15 Av • Parshat Va'etchanan • Shabbat Nachamu

July 23-24, 2021

Steven Dorfman, President

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## SHABBAT SCHEDULE

### FRIDAY JULY 23

CANDLELIGHTING 7:42pm

FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES 6:30pm

### SATURDAY, JULY 24

NO GEMARA SHIUR

SHACHARIT 9:15AM

MINCHA 7:40pm

MAARIV: 8:40

HAVDALAH: 8:42PM

## WEEKDAY DAVENING TIMES

SUN 8:00AM & 7:40PM

MON -- THUR 7:00AM & 7:40PM

FRI 7:00AM & 6:30PM

## Membership Renewal 5782

All current members are invited to renew your membership for the upcoming year 5782. This year to make it easier, you can [log-in](#) to your account to view your invoice and you can pay online or send a check. You can also call the office at 310-276-7650 or email [mkramer@yinh.org](mailto:mkramer@yinh.org)

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If you are not yet a member and would like to join, you can fill out a membership application (on the table in the lobby) or you can find it on our website.

Also on our website, you can:



Order your Arba Minim directly from the shul.  
*Order by Aug 30th*



Place Names in the Yizkor Booklet.  
*Submit by Sept 2nd*



Reserve your High Holiday Seats. Once you renew your membership, please reserve your seats for the High Holidays

Dear Members & Friends,

This Shabbat is 'Tu Be'Av' – the fifteenth day of the Jewish month of Av – an obscure Jewish festival day when we highlight the importance of romantic love. And so, in preparation for this curious festival, I decided to research the phenomenon of love to see what modern science has to say about it.



Surprisingly, scientists have only relatively recently begun to research the human emotion we call love. The ancient Greeks grappled with it, but love was never high on their list of investigative topics. Of course, poets and dramatists have always used love as a central motif for their creative work, but only to entertain, even if in the process some of their output offered deep insights into this ubiquitous emotion and its effect on the human condition.

Frankly, scientific research is anything but poetic and creative. Nevertheless, the power of empirical data is indisputable, even if it is not warm and fuzzy, and what has emerged out of the research is that the love phenomenon is hard to define. A 1970s study by the late Canadian psychologist, John Alan Lee (1933-2013), defined six separate categories of love, while a study first published by Robert J. Sternberg in the 1980s defined love as a triangle of three elements, which can be further broken down into eight definitions. In short, the debate continues to rage.

Ultimately, love is easily understood in most of its guises, even by non-psychologists and those not interested in statistics. The powerful feelings of closeness one has for a parent, for example, or for siblings, is intuitive at the most basic level. Each human being is instinctively eager to perpetuate his or her family, and emotional bonds with parents and siblings strengthen that commitment.

It is this primary drive that can also explain the deep love for your children. The emotional commitment to offspring is what ensures that the primordial selfish instinct we are all born with is superseded, in order to prioritize the needs of your child. Some psychologists argue that this is just a victory of one type of selfishness over another – after all, the desire to outlive oneself through one's progeny is just another form of narcissism.

Love between friends is also very deep. A friendship from early childhood that endures into adulthood is incredibly powerful. Shared experiences, loyalty, trust, and a level of affection that is lasting, define these relationships, and it has been proven that being with a close friend can someone recover when they are sick – decreasing high blood pressure, increasing dopamine levels, and reducing anxiety. And again, this kind of love makes perfect sense scientifically. It is bound up with the human instinct for survival. Close friends help us survive, and the deeper the friendship, and the greater the number of such friends, the more chance one has of living a longer and healthier life.

But the love scientists really struggle with is the kind we all know as 'romantic love'. Two people with no family ties, and no history together, fall in love. Different cultures do it differently. Individualistic cultures, epitomized by the modern western world, place a stress on romantic love as a precedent to lifelong commitment, while cultures that focus heavily on collective thinking and community, including certain segments of the Jewish world, place such love second, focusing first on familial compatibility and financial considerations.

Whichever culture it is, romantic love must exist between the couple for their relationship to endure. But the question is: why? Logic dictates that emotional compatibility should not be that important. If the primary directive of the human condition is for two individuals to be with each other so that they can produce progeny – if that relationship makes sense 'on paper', why should romantic love, which is for all-intents-and-purposes a distraction, play any role? And what about people who fall in love, get married, and don't have children? Their love for each other can be equally intense and all-consuming. Why is romantic love such a central feature of our lives?

Although there are a number of interesting and even compelling theories, this question remains better than any of the answers, and it thwarts all scientific attempts to resolve it. So many couple relationships that make no sense whatsoever endure only because of the bond of romantic love, while many others that do work or should work at every other level, crash and burn because of the lack of romantic love between the two people involved. In the final analysis, humanity might be better served without the burden and the complications of romantic love. In which case, what is the point? Why have we been hardwired to fall in love?

The Torah portion of Va'etchanan has an answer. In a directive we are all very familiar with, we are instructed (Deut. 6:5): וְיָהֲבֵתָ אֱתָהּ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ בְּכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ - "you should love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with everything you have." The commandment goes on to describe a mandated relationship that is intense, demanding, and all-consuming. You are required to talk about God when you wake up, and when you go to sleep. You need to post signs of your love on your doorways, and wrap signs of your love around your arms and on your head. You need to talk about Him to your children. You need to obsess about your relationship with God until it takes over your life. What is that if it isn't romantic love? Yes, that's right – we are commanded to have a lifelong love affair with God.

But this God-mandated commandment presents a problem. How would we know what romantic love means, or how to do it, if we had nothing to compare it with? So God gave us a window into the relationship He wants with us. That window is the inexplicable bond between romantic lovers. A relationship that serves no other purpose than to demonstrate how much God wants us to love Him, and how much He loves us – even though it makes no sense. When God tells us that "you should love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with everything you have", what he is really saying is "fall in love with Me – that is your purpose on this world." Now isn't that something worth thinking about?

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom and a great week ahead,

*Rabbi Pini Dunner*



## Sisterhood Corner

July

We hope you are enjoying safe summer travels and the dog days of summer.

Save the date!

High Holy Days Discovery Concert

Wednesday, August 25th

There's still time to sign up!

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)

Shabbat Shalom,

Cecile & Ruthie

Sisterhood Co-Presidents



## YAHRTZEITS

**Eugene Nissel**  
Yechiel ben HaRav Chaim  
Menachem z"l  
Father of  
**Raphy Nissel**  
Yahrtzeit - 18 Av

**Yaakov Gindi**  
Yaakov Eliyahu ben Elie z"l  
Father of  
**Elie Gindi**  
Yahrtzeit - 20 Av

**Frances Fay Cohen**  
Faygie bat Zev Wolf a"h  
Mother of  
**Hart Cohen**  
Yahrtzeit - 19 Av

**David Kellerman**  
David ben Ephraim HaLevi z"l  
Father of  
**Hillel Kellerman**  
**Jonathan Kellerman**  
Yahrtzeit - 21 Av



Lily Kramer

David Bayer

Madeline Kramer

David Markowitz

Darryl Kam

Evan Cohen

Michael Bayer

Theodore Fogelman

Yasmine Louie

Jeff Gross

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

**YINBH DUBAI MISSION**  
**OCTOBER 21-31, 2021**

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

Optional extension to Jerusalem for Shabbat at the King David Hotel

Special Guest  
David Freidman

*Happy Anniversary*

*Bill & Linda Levin*

*Barry Novack &*

*Annie Baum*

