



# Tefilla Notebook

23 Adar • Shabbat Parshat Vayakhel Pekudei - Parah

March 13-14, 2015

Philip Kaufler, President

Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi

Nati Bar-Am, Chazan

9261 Alden Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210

310-276-7650 • office@yinbh.org

**SHABBAT SCHEDULE**

**FRIDAY, March 13**

6:40 pm CANDLE LIGHTING  
6:30 pm KABBALAT SHABBAT

**SHABBAT, March 14**

8:30 am RABBI'S GEMARA SHIUR  
9:15 am SHACHARIT  
6:45 pm MINCHA  
7:05 pm SEUDAH SHLISHIT  
7:45 pm MA'ARIV  
7:45 pm SHABBAT ENDS

**Weekday Services**

Sun., March 15 8:00 am & 6:45pm  
Mon., March 16 6:20 am & 6:45pm  
Tues., March 17 6:30 am & 6:45pm  
Wed., March 18 6:30 am & 6:45pm  
Thurs., March 19 6:20 am & 6:45pm  
Fri., March 20 6:30 am & 6:30pm

Thank You!

*Nadine Gerson &  
Robert Zeller*

*for sponsoring this week's  
Special Kiddush Luncheon  
to celebrate their  
recent wedding*



**We welcome  
Scholar-in-residence  
Dr. Gil Graff  
"Lessons from mid-20th  
Century Heroes"**

Dearest Members and Friends,

Few people follow Russian politics, and even fewer are aware of the interplay between religious affiliation and national identity in that murky world. Of course we have all heard of Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, but most of us know nothing about those who surround him, nor anything about the system of government over which he presides. Twenty five years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the decision by Russia to embrace Western ideals and the values of freedom, it seems that the West's former nemesis has regressed, and is in the firm grip of a grim and ruthless dictatorship engaged in the pursuit of power by any means, just as bad as it was during Soviet times.

Late last month, a man called Boris Nemtsov a Putin Critic was gunned down on the streets of Moscow. He was 55. Tragically, no one was particularly surprised to hear he had been assassinated. He joins a long list of Putin opponents who have met grisly deaths, just the latest victim of Putin's intolerance for dissent and criticism. Considering that Nemtsov's strident critiques of Russia's President as far back as the year 2000, it is remarkable he survived for so long. Intriguingly, although his mother was Jewish, Nemtsov deliberately opted to hide his Jewishness, declaring himself to be Russian Orthodox. Nonetheless - as was noted in an AJC report in 2005 - as far as the Russian public was concerned, he was Jewish.

Nemtsov's decision to obscure his Jewish origins was no accident. In post-Soviet Russia, "the Orthodox Church is becoming more visible and present in the state and government, not unlike pre-revolutionary times," wrote Moscow's Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt in Tablet Magazine last week. He added that "this state of affairs has...many ramifications....Practicing Jews in higher government positions are afraid to hold public [Jewish] life-cycle events, and...are being approached by representatives of the church with soft-sell advice to convert to the state church."

Some weeks ago we welcomed Rabbi Yosef Mendeleovich to our shul. No one I have ever met better exemplifies the opposite attitude to Nemtsov's, and others like him. Rather than bow to the compelling demands of Russian prejudice against Jews and Judaism, Mendeleovich, who was refused an exit permit to Israel by the Soviet authorities, and then arrested and imprisoned for his part in the 1970 Dymshits-Kuznetsov hijacking affair, defiantly defied the wanton discrimination, even when this caused him incredible suffering. He told us that his refusal to remove his yarmulke resulted in him not being able to see his father, even though his father was only allowed to visit him in the prison camp once a year. Sadly, his father died before he was freed, and they never saw each other again. What struck me about Rabbi Mendeleovich, as I listened to him speak, was his incredible enthusiasm and zest for Judaism in the face of such adversity. Permanently upbeat, he confronted every challenge with humor and positivity, without ever conceding an iota of his faith.

In this week's double Torah portion, Vayakhel-Pekudei, we are presented with an almost word-for-word repetition of the Torah portions of only a couple of weeks ago, Terumah and Tetzaveh. The repetition seems redundant, a problem compounded by the fact that the Torah is meant to be succinct. Rashi quotes a Midrash about the Nesi'im, the princes of each tribe, who made their pledge for the Mishkan right at the beginning of the campaign: וְתָתְנוּ צְבוּרָה מִה שֶׁמִּתְּנֶדְבִין וּמֵה שֶׁמִּחְסִירִים אֲנִי מְשַׁלְּמִין אוֹתוֹ - 'let the congregation give what they give, and we will donate whatever is still missing once they're done.' As it turned out, the princes totally underestimated the peoples' generosity. All that was left to donate were the precious gems needed for the High Priest's breastplate and garments, which, predictably, were not available in the desert, and had to be delivered miraculously. The princes' lack of enthusiasm did not go unnoticed, and the word Nesi'im is written in the Torah without a 'yud', to demonstrate that something fundamental was lacking. If anything, the princes should have been at the front of the line. The monetary value of their gifts was certainly greater than most or all of the other gifts, but in the final analysis that didn't count - it is the effort and enthusiasm that are the key elements of every good deed, and they are the only things that guarantee an enduring legacy.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein once explained the difference between the countless Shabbat observant immigrants of the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries whose children and grandchildren deserted Judaism, and those immigrants who saw the Judaism of their children and grandchildren endure. All Shabbat observant immigrant men would regularly lose employment for refusing to work on Shabbat. But while children of the unemployed immigrants who sat at their Shabbat table with a gloomy face became disinclined to observe Shabbat and drifted away, the children of those unemployed immigrants who came home on Friday with a sparkle in their eye, and enthusiastically embraced Shabbat with warmth and joyful attention to every detail, despite the uncertainty of their livelihood - those children went on themselves to become enthusiastic Shabbat observant Jews.

The message of the redundant repetition is that it is not redundant at all. God's instructions in Terumah-Tetzaveh could have been followed by a simple pronouncement that the Jews did everything as God had instructed Moshe. But particularly for a mitzva that required volunteerism and unlimited generosity, the fastidious attention to every detail shown by those who constructed the Mishkan demonstrates that they did it with boundless enthusiasm and incredible joy. The comprehensive repetition is a testament to that enthusiasm, an enthusiasm that separates those whose Judaism and Jewish identity will endure, from those who have faded and will fade into history. That is something worth repeating, and repeating, over and over again.

Wishing you Shabbat Shalom, and a wonderful week ahead,

*Rabbi Pini Dunner*



**Pesach Seder 2015**  
Beverly Hills Synagogue



Enjoy a gourmet seder at our synagogue on the first night of Passover.

first class cuisine & wine  
full range of required customary foods  
Hand-baked and machine shmura matza

THE EVENING WILL BE LED BY



**Rabbi Pini Dunner**



**Chazan Nati Bar-Am**

Adults \$125 each | Children (aged 3-12) \$90 each  
For further details or to reserve your places please email office@lynh.org or call us at 310-276-7650

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**WELCOME new members**

**Josef & Marlene Kreitenberg**

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**Eshagh Eshaghpour and family**

*Our deepest sympathies...*

**Cecile Gromis**  
on the loss of her brother  
**Dr. Arthur Silberspitz**  
Avraham Abba ben Yitzchak z"l

**Chai Lifeline Dinner**



**Jaime & Marilyn Sohacheski**  
with Geoff Schwartz (Giants) & Mitchell Schwartz (Browns)

**Simon & Susy Rubinstein**  
Happy Anniversary

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

**Josse Lopatin**  
**July Caroline Hodara**

**SPRINGTIME IN YULA FASHION SHOW**  
Women Only

Sunday, March 15th  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**YULA Girls High School**  
1619 S. Robertson Blvd.

Adult Ticket: \$18 • Child Ticket: \$5  
YULA Students: Free

**SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**  
\$250: FOUR RESERVED VIP TICKETS, A LISTING ON THE EVENT SPONSORSHIP BOARD, AND AN AD IN THE YULA FASHIONS MAGAZINE, REFLECTIONS.  
\$150: TWO RESERVED VIP TICKETS, AND A LISTING ON THE EVENT SPONSORSHIP BOARD.

Hors d'oeuvres and desserts will be served  
Charity raffle to benefit Sharsheret

**CLOTHING BY**  
Ainyah's Boutique Karen Michelle Miss Irene      NCJW Saks Fifth Avenue Seven Two Denim

In memory of **Ya'akov ben Mari z'l**  
Father of **Behrouz Soroudi**  
Yahrtzeit - 23 Adar

In memory of **Benzion Ben Schmuel z'l**  
Father of **Sam Varon**  
Yahrtzeit - 25 Adar

In memory of **Jacov Tzvi Halevi z'l**  
Father of **Alan Liker**  
Yahrtzeit - 27Adar

In memory of **Shmuel Ben Baruch z'l**  
Father of **Patrick Hodara**  
Yahrtzeit - 28 Adar



**Marilyn Sohacheski & Sabine Dunner**

**Rivke & Dani Samson**

**PURIM SEUDA 2015**



**Howie & Shirin Fialkov**

**Carmit & Nati Baram**



Photos by Barry Novack