



# Young Israel of Chomedey Congregation Chevra Mishnayis

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B"H

## YIC Weekly Newsletter DEC 22 - 28 / 24 - 30 Kislev

DAY	DATE	SCHACHRIS	MINCHA / MA'ARIV
SUNDAY	Dec 22	08:30 AM	4:00 PM
MONDAY	Dec 23	07:00 AM	7:00 PM
TUESDAY	Dec 24	07:00 AM	7:00 PM
WEDNESDAY	Dec 25	07:00 AM	7:00 PM
THURSDAY	Dec 26	07:00 AM	7:00 PM
FRIDAY	Dec 27	07:00 AM	4:00 PM <b>Shabbat Starts: 3:59PM</b>
SATURDAY	Dec 28	Parshat: MIKEITZ Rabbi's Class: 09:00 AM Schachris: 09:30 AM followed by Kiddish followed by MINCHA	<b>Shabbat Ends: 5:08 PM</b> <b>Ma'ariv 5:30 PM</b>

**NOTE:** During Hanukkah there are services every morning at 7 AM except for Sunday mornings on Dec 22 and Dec 29 when we start at 8:30 AM

**KIDDISH SAT DEC 21:** This week's High Kiddush was sponsored by the shul, honouring the 26+ years of exemplary service by Gabbai Moshe Levinger to our shul and its members. Issie gave a short overview of Moshe's background and his accomplishments as our Gabbai, also introducing his beloved wife Frida, his 2 wonderful daughters Suzie and Sharon, his son-in-law David, and his beautiful grandchildren Emily and Alex. A special proclamation (attached) was read out to the congregants, and a special presentation was made to Moshe in recognition of his devoted serve to our shul. Best wishes were extended to Moshe for good health to him and his family in his retirement.



**LIQUOR DONATIONS:** A bottle was donated by Frida & Moshe Levinger in honour of Moshe's High Kiddish today.

**RABBI'S CLASSES:** **Rabbi Banon's** class this week is cancelled.

**CONDOLENCES:** Condolences are extended to the family of the late Leah Lefcovitch Z"l who passed away on Monday Dec 16th. Although not active for many years, the Lefcovitches were long-time members of the YIC, and indeed the burial took place at the Young Israel of Chomedey cemetery. She is survived by her devoted husband of seventy-two years, Louis Lefcovitch, her sister, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and lifelong friends.

*"May the Family Know no Further Sorrows"*

**BIRTHDAYS:** **HAPPY 79th BIRTHDAY** to Gerry Lipstein, who celebrates this Wednesday on the 25th of December, the 3rd day of Chanukah. Gerry, we all wish you many more years of health and happiness with your beshert Elaine and family - **MAZAL TOV.**

**MAZAL TOV:** **a) MAZAL TOV** to members Adrian and Natalie Bercovici of Generations Foundation for their work for the past 20 years. From feeding over 8,000 school kids 2 meals a day plus snacks, to Holiday parties and handing out gifts during their busy season, Adrian and Natalie have been part of a whirlwind of activities these past few weeks. Megablocks, always a generous supporter of Generations, once again donated hundreds of toys. Global News was there to catch it all on film when their reporter spent a few days with the Bercovicis, ending with a live broadcast on Wednesday night's news. And as is their tradition, the Bercovicis will be attending and bringing the toys to our Chanukah party as well. Their work is a true Hanukkah miracle and a **YASHIR KOACH** to both of them and their organization. **b) MAZAL TOV** to Daniel & Arun Cohen's daughter Abigail who turns 3 this Monday, December 23 - the 1st day of Hanukkah. Abby is the little sister of Nathaniel and Jacob, Shabbat regulars with their dad. Wishing the Cohen family a hearty **MAZAL TOV** and may Abigail always be blessed with health and happiness. Ad 120. **c) MAZAL TOV** to the Rudy's grandson in Israel, Yisroel, who turns 21 this Monday Dec 23rd. Naches from all your grandchildren, ad 120!

**REFUAH SHLEMA:** **a)** A **REFUAH SHLEMA** to Moishe (Morris) Greenberg, Lillian Rudy's brother who was rushed this week to the hospital after suffering a heart attack, and where the Rudys have spent most of the past few days at his side. **b)** I understand that Yakki Brown is still in the hospital undergoing some new tests, as are Bella Chorán and Billy Rubin, and at this time of Hanukkah we wish them all a Hannukah miracle of a complete **REFUAH SHLEMA** - to them and to everyone else under the weather.

\*\*\*\*\* Videos and Images \*\*\*\*\*

**Muslim Israeli Police Chief to UN: Arabs Reach Highest Levels in Israeli Society**

[https://unitedwithisrael.org/muslim-israeli-police-chief-to-un-arabs-reach-highest-levels-in-israeli-society/?utm\\_source=MadMimi&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=Netanyahu+Thrilled+with+UK+Winner+%27My+Friend+Boris+Johnson%E2%80%99%21+Labour+Against+Anti-Semitism+%E2%80%98Relieved%E2%80%99+by+Corbyn+Defeat%3A+Israeli+Student%27s+Satellite+Launched+into+Space%21&utm\\_campaign=20191213\\_m155833015\\_Netanyahu+Thrilled+with+UK+Winner+%27My+Friend+Boris+Johnson%E2%80%99%21+Labour+Against+Anti-Semitism+%E2%80%98Relieved%E2%80%99+by+Corbyn+Defeat%3A+Israeli+Student%27s+Satellite+Launched+into+Space%21&utm\\_term=Major-General-Jamal-Hakroosh-200x140\\_jpg](https://unitedwithisrael.org/muslim-israeli-police-chief-to-un-arabs-reach-highest-levels-in-israeli-society/?utm_source=MadMimi&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Netanyahu+Thrilled+with+UK+Winner+%27My+Friend+Boris+Johnson%E2%80%99%21+Labour+Against+Anti-Semitism+%E2%80%98Relieved%E2%80%99+by+Corbyn+Defeat%3A+Israeli+Student%27s+Satellite+Launched+into+Space%21&utm_campaign=20191213_m155833015_Netanyahu+Thrilled+with+UK+Winner+%27My+Friend+Boris+Johnson%E2%80%99%21+Labour+Against+Anti-Semitism+%E2%80%98Relieved%E2%80%99+by+Corbyn+Defeat%3A+Israeli+Student%27s+Satellite+Launched+into+Space%21&utm_term=Major-General-Jamal-Hakroosh-200x140_jpg)

**A STAR WARS HANUKKAH** (Thanks to the Buraks)

[https://www.aish.com/h/c/mm/A-Star-Wars-Chanukah-Music-Video.html#.XfZX\\_YWu98k.email](https://www.aish.com/h/c/mm/A-Star-Wars-Chanukah-Music-Video.html#.XfZX_YWu98k.email)

PARSHAT HASHAVUA - WEEKLY TORAH PORTION  
*The Parshah in a Nutshell*

MIKEITZ

Genesis 41:1-44:17



Joseph's imprisonment finally ends when Pharaoh dreams of seven fat cows that are swallowed up by seven lean cows, and of seven fat ears of grain swallowed by seven lean ears. Joseph interprets the dreams to mean that seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of hunger, and advises Pharaoh to store grain during the plentiful years. Pharaoh appoints Joseph governor of Egypt. Joseph marries Asenath, daughter of Potiphar, and they have two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Famine spreads throughout the region, and food can be obtained only in Egypt. Ten of Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to purchase grain; the youngest, Benjamin, stays home, for Jacob fears for his safety. Joseph recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him; he accuses them of being spies, insists that they bring Benjamin to prove that they are who they say they are, and imprisons Simeon as a hostage. Later, they discover that the money they paid for their provisions has been mysteriously returned to them.

Jacob agrees to send Benjamin only after Judah assumes personal and eternal responsibility for him. This time Joseph receives them kindly, releases Simeon, and invites them to an eventful dinner at his home. But then he plants his silver goblet, purportedly imbued with magic powers, in Benjamin's sack. When the brothers set out for home the next morning, they are pursued, searched, and arrested when the goblet is discovered. Joseph offers to set them free and retain only Benjamin as his slave.

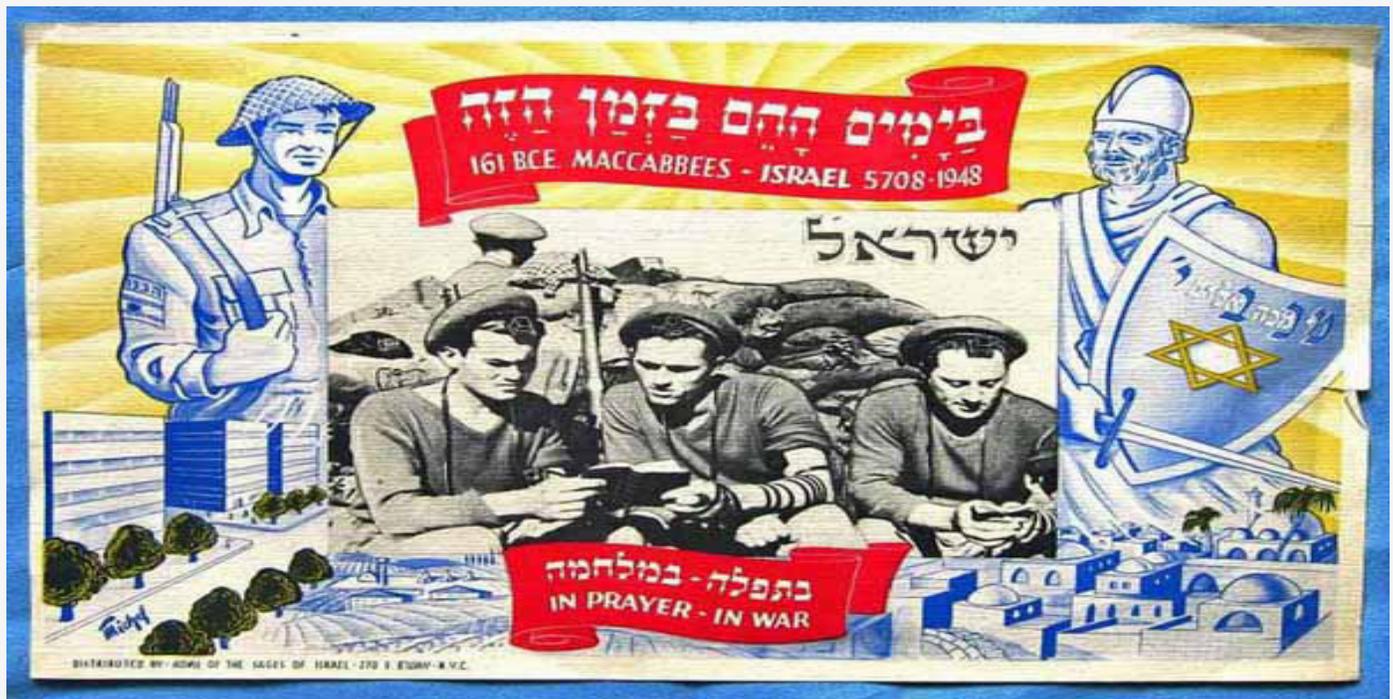
## Yahrzeits for the week of Dec 23 - 29 / 25 Kislev - 1 Tevet

COMMON	JEWISH	MEMBER		DECEASED	RELATION
DATE	DATE				
Dec 23	Kislev 25	Reisha Sofer	for	Avraham Sofar z"l	father
Dec 23	Kislev 25	Eleanor Tylbor	for	Binem Tylbor z"l	father in law
Dec 23	Kislev 25	Max Stollar	for	Beatrice Kershaw z"l	sister
Dec 24	Kislev 26	Aisik Melnik	for	Chiam Melnik z"l	brother
Dec 25	Kislev 27	Roslyn Pfefer	for	Betty Engel Dorfman z"l	mother
Dec 26	Kislev 28	Nancy Bresler	for	Leon Bresler z"l	father in law
Dec 27	Kislev 29	Laura Nayman	for	Max Nayman z"l	husband
Dec 27	Kislev 29	Isidore (Issie) Baum	for	Evelin Baum z"l	sister
Dec 27	Kislev 29	Paula Goldsman	for	Leon z"l	father in law
Dec 29	Tevet 1	Paul Kulik	for	Sarolta Kulik z"l	mother

Any Young Israel member **MISSING** a Yahrzeit notice in the shul bulletin, please email the info directly to [therudys@videotron.ca](mailto:therudys@videotron.ca) Please provide full name in English (and Hebrew if possible) and the date of the Yahrzeit as well as relationship to YIC member. As soon as info is received, it will be forwarded to the shul office, or you can also email or phone in the info direct to the office if you prefer. **Note:** In the event a female member does not want her maiden name included in the weekly bulletin Yahrzeit notices - for possible security reasons - please advise the office, and we will make the appropriate change.

### HANUKKAH LATKE-BITS

- Hanukkah and Chanukah are the two spelling versions that are most widely used and accepted. But dozens are literally used. All are OK!
- Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees over the Greek-Syrian ruler, Antiochus about 2200 years ago. Look it up - Wikipedia says so!
- Given the miracle of Hanukkah, Hanukkah foods are the healthiest of all the Jewish holidays. The miracle of Hanukkah is that the oil expanded to last from 1 day to 8 days. The reverse happens when you eat Hanukkah foods. Trust me - it's true!
- In 2013 Hanukkah coincided with the US Thanksgiving, and Americans stuffed their soufganiot with turkey - and vice versa! This won't happen again until 2070, when the first night of Hanukkah will coincide with a particularly late Thanksgiving dinner.
- On Hanukkah we play with dreidls which are literally spinning tops. In Israel they play with elections, which makes your head spin faster than the dreidls.
- Throughout the Hanukkah holiday, you light 44 candles. Always have an extra box on hand, if you break a candle or two. That extra box will last you for a good few years. Unless of course, you're a shlimazel, and break a lot of candles.
- If you like scented Hanukkah candles, they are available in many different smells. There is a new one out today, it smells like im-**PEACH**-ment.



### Under Syrian Rule

More than 2000 years ago there was a time when the land of Israel was part of the Syrian-Greek Empire, dominated by Syrian rulers of the dynasty of the Seleucids.

The story that leads up to Chanukah, starts with Antiochus III, King of Syria, who reigned from 3538 to 3574 (222-186 B.C.E.). He waged war with King Ptolemy of Egypt over the possession of the Land of Israel. Antiochus III was victorious and the Land of Israel was annexed to his empire. At the beginning of his reign he was favorably disposed toward the Jews and accorded them some privileges. Later on, however, when he was beaten by the Romans and compelled to pay heavy taxes, the burden fell upon the various peoples of his empire who were forced to furnish the heavy gold that was required of him by the Romans. When Antiochus died, his son Seleucus IV took over, and further oppressed the Jews.

Added to the troubles from the outside were the grave perils that threatened Judaism from within. The influence of the Hellenists (people who accepted idol-worship and the Syrian way of life) was increasing. Yochanan, the High Priest, foresaw the danger to Judaism from the penetration of Syrian-Greek influence into the Holy Land. The Jewish people could never give up their faith in G-d and accept the idol-worship of the Syrians.

Yochanan was therefore opposed to any attempt on the part of the Jewish Hellenists to introduce Greek and Syrian customs into the land. The Hellenists hated him. One of them told the King's commissioner that in the treasury of the Temple there was a great deal of wealth. The wealth in the treasury consisted of the contributions of "half a shekel" made by all adult Jews annually. That was given for the purpose of the sacrifices on the altar, as well as for fixing and improving the Temple building. Seleucus needed money in order to pay the Romans. He sent his minister Helyodros to take the money from the treasury of the Temple. In vain did Yochanan, the High Priest, beg him not to do it. Helyodros did not listen and entered the gate of the Temple. But suddenly, he became pale with fright. The next moment he fainted and fell to the ground. After Helyodros came to, he did not dare enter again.

### The Madman: Antiochus

A short time later, Seleucus was killed and his brother Antiochus IV began to reign over Syria (in

3586 - 174 B.C.E.). He was a tyrant of a rash and impetuous nature, contemptuous of religion and of the feelings of others. He was called "Epiphanes," meaning "the gods' beloved." Several of the Syrian rulers received similar titles. But a historian of his time, Polebius, gave him the epithet Epimanes ("madman"), a title more suitable to the character of this harsh and cruel king.

Desiring to unify his kingdom through the medium of a common religion and culture, Antiochus tried to root out the individualism of the Jews by suppressing all the Jewish Laws. He removed the righteous High Priest, Yochanan, from the Temple in Jerusalem, and in his place installed Yochanan's brother Joshua, who loved to call himself by the Greek name of Jason. For he was a member of the Hellenist party, and he used his high office to spread more and more of the Greek customs among the priesthood.

Antiochus was at that time engaged in a successful war against Egypt. But messengers from Rome arrived and commanded him to stop the war. Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, a rumor spread that a serious accident had befallen Antiochus. Thinking that he was dead, the people rebelled against Menelaus. The treacherous High Priest fled together with his friends.

### **The Martyrs**

Antiochus returned from Egypt enraged by Roman interference with his ambitions. When he heard what had taken place in Jerusalem, he ordered his army to fall upon the Jews. Thousands of Jews were killed. Antiochus then enacted a series of harsh decrees against the Jews. Jewish worship was forbidden; the scrolls of the Law were confiscated and burned. Sabbath rest, circumcision and the dietary laws were prohibited under penalty of death. Even one of the respected elders of that generation, Rabbi Eliezer, a man of 90, was ordered by the servants of Antiochus to eat pork so that others would do the same. When he refused they suggested to him that he pick up the meat to his lips to appear to be eating. But Rabbi Eliezer refused to do even that and was put to death. There were thousands of others who likewise sacrificed their lives. The famous story of Hannah and her seven children happened at that time. Antiochus's men went from town to town and from village to village to force the inhabitants to worship pagan gods. Only one refuge area remained and that was the hills of Judea with their caves. But even there did the Syrians pursue the faithful Jews, and many a Jew died a martyr's death.

### **Mattityahu**

One day the henchmen of Antiochus arrived in the village of Modiin where Mattityahu, the old priest, lived. The Syrian officer built an altar in the marketplace of the village and demanded that Mattityahu offer sacrifices to the Greek gods. Mattityahu replied, "I, my sons and my brothers are determined to remain loyal to the covenant which our G-d made with our ancestors!" Thereupon, a Hellenistic Jew approached the altar to offer a sacrifice. Mattityahu grabbed his sword and killed him, and his sons and friends fell upon the Syrian officers and men. They killed many of them and chased the rest away. They then destroyed the altar.

Mattityahu knew that Antiochus would be enraged when he heard what had happened. He would certainly send an expedition to punish him and his followers. Mattityahu, therefore, left the village of Modiin and fled together with his sons and friends to the hills of Judea. All loyal and courageous Jews joined them. They formed legions and from time to time they left their hiding places to fall upon enemy detachments and outposts, and to destroy the pagan altars that were built by order of Antiochus.

### **The Maccabees**

Before his death, Mattityahu called his sons together and urged them to continue to fight in defense of G d's Torah. He asked them to follow the counsel of their brother Shimon the Wise. In waging warfare, he said, their leader should be Judah the Strong. Judah was called "Maccabee," a word composed of the initial letters of the four Hebrew words Mi Kamocho Ba'eilim Hashem, "Who is like You, O G-d."

Antiochus sent his General Apolonius to wipe out Judah and his followers, the Maccabees. Though greater in number and equipment than their adversaries, the Syrians were defeated by the Maccabees. Antiochus sent out another expedition which also was defeated. He realized that only by sending a powerful army could he hope to defeat Judah and his brave fighting men. An army consisting of more than 40,000 men swept the land under the leadership of two commanders. When Judah and his brothers heard of that, they exclaimed: "Let us fight unto death in defense of our souls and our Temple!" The people assembled in Mitzpah, where Samuel, the prophet of old, had offered prayers to G-d. After a series of battles the war was won.

### **The Dedication**

Now the Maccabees returned to Jerusalem to liberate it. They entered the Temple and cleared it of the idols placed there by the Syrian vandals. Judah and his followers built a new altar, which he dedicated on the twenty-fifth of the month of Kislev, in the year 3622 (139 B.C.E.).

Since the golden Menorah had been stolen by the Syrians, the Maccabees now made one of cheaper metal. When they wanted to light it, they found only a small cruse of pure olive oil bearing the seal of the High Priest Yochanan. It was sufficient to light only for one day. By a miracle of G-d, it continued to burn for eight days, till new oil was made available. That miracle proved that G-d had again taken His people under His protection. In memory of this, our sages appointed these eight days for annual thanksgiving and for lighting candles.

### **After Chanukah**

The brightness of the first Chanukah light had dwindled down, and the holy fires on the altar burnt again in the Beit Hamikdash, from morning to morning, as prescribed by the Law. The priests were again officiating in the old customary ways, as they prepared the offerings. Order and peace seemed established. One man, though, realized that the time for a return to normal living had not yet come. Israel could not yet afford to relax; it would have to stand ready and prepare to carry on the fight against the overwhelming odds of the enemy. This man was Judah Maccabi. His name was upon everyone's lips and in every Jewish heart, admired as a hero, as a man with the heart of a lion and the simple piety of a child; as the one whose mighty armies fought and conquered, yet who never failed to pray to G-d, the Master of all battles, before he entered the fray.

Messengers arrived from Gilead. The pagans joined forces to destroy Judea. From Galilee came bad news of similar evil intentions and active preparations in Ptolemais, Tyre and Zidon. Messengers found Judah Maccabi already at work. Fortifications had to be thrown up around Zion. Towers, walls, battlements and moat had to be constructed opposite the fort still held by their worst enemies, the Hellenistic Jews, under the leadership of the false priest Menelaus. These hated everything Jewish, and lived in the hope of the return of the Syrian masters. Judah Maccabi prepared Jerusalem against them and against imminent assault by the troops of Antiochus. Under his supervision the Jewish people worked feverishly to refill their arsenals and turn the whole country into a stronghold.

Once this most important task was accomplished, Judah Maccabi led his freshly trained troops to the aid of the regions and villages harassed by their spiteful neighbors. He drove the Idumeans from Hebron, and he punished the people who had acted with hostility towards Jewish settlers. He led his army across the Jordan River against the Ammonites. Their capital fell and so did their fortress. Judah's brother Shimon led an army north to aid the plagued Jews of Galilee and defeated the enemy. At his urging, a great many of the Jewish settlers who had fled to Jerusalem, returned to rebuild in safety what had been destroyed during the years of weakness. Judah Maccabi and Yonatan joined forces and marched against Gilead, where they were met with the toughest resistance. By Shavuot, this campaign was successfully concluded. Judea was again free, and all parts captured by the neighboring nation had been recovered. Celebrations and festivity transformed Jerusalem and the Holy Temple, hardly half a year after the victories over the Syrian armies. The Jewish people expressed their joy and gratitude to G-d in the form of psalms and offerings. For He had restored glory and liberty to the Jewish land.



**MEMORY LANE # 45 \*(EDITED)  
FROM THE BULLETIN OF THE YOUNG ISRAEL OF CHOMEDEY  
JUNE 1965 EDITION**

**NOSTALGIA**

**United Talmud Torahs Chomedey Kindergarden Class of 1962-63**

Bradley Victor, Jeffrey Levy, Earl Wexler, Mark Strohl, Alan Weiner, Brian Silverman, Stephen Goldman, Rhonda Caron, Nancy Sasson, Feliuce Mendelsohn, Elaine Milstein, Sharon Kleinberg, Brenda Goldberg, Tammy Stockhrim, Ellie Parker, Kenny Ramelson, Wesley Gorin, Marian Lederman, Billy Goldig, Laurie Kazenal, Howard Kruger, Brian Carol, Stephen Sailofsky, Elaine Ramelson, Elana Bregman, Warrewn Tabachnick, Harvey Frenkiel, Michael Goldsmith, Debbie Orbaum, Joel Blumenthal, Ronald Yacowar, Todd Geiger, Derick Rappaport, Ronnie Levine, Marshal Forester, Stephen Fleisler, Esther Mandell, Brahm Shiller

**United Talmud Torahs Chomedey Kindergarden Class of 1963-64**

Ellen Silverstein, Jeffrey Goldman, Jeffrey Bercovitch, Derrick Blumenthal, Sharon Smith, Cecilia Goodman, Mitchell Axelrad, Evan Friedman, Stanley Sculnick, Blair Katz, Rosalee Unger, Joy Walker, Charlie Grill, Ronnie Caplan, Danny Chyfetz, Steven Sofer, Michael Kaufman, Susan Ackman, Theresa Victor, Marcy Rubin, Evelyn Hazanoff, Lisa Maislin, Debbie Leonoff, Maureen Epstein, Lloyd Frost, Ernie Roll, Gary Kostiner, Joel Mandel, Murray Ginsberg, Earl Fleisher, Leora Schwartzman, Jodi Geller, Fern Schachter, Florence Aaron, Janet Sculnick, Renee Gutterman, Debbie Schondorf, Ruthie Panofsky, Marshall Steinman, Ita Kendall, Eric Babins, Eric Grief, Jonah Libman, Brian Cooper, Sheldon, Novack, Mark Goldman, Jeffrey Glatt, Stuart Cahan, Earl Teitelbaum

**New Sisterhood Executive for 1965**

Minnie Feldman, Florence Eichenbaum, Rose Strohl, Mary Boeko, Doris Kanner, Mary Lifchitz, Faye Kravitz, Roz Bercovitch, Sandra Greenberg, Renee Sasson, Goldie Zand, Myrna Cassoff, Riva Boxer

*(YashIr Koach to Fred Rudy for providing us all with these memorable historical moments, which some of us may still remember!)*



ברוך

# Young Israel of Chomedey Congregation Chevra Mishnayis

## With Blessings to Gabbai Moshe Levinger

Whereas Gabbai Moshe Levinger - hereafter referred to as Gabbai Moishe or Moshe, has according to our Mi Sheberach Prayer of Shabbat, been involved faithfully in the needs of our community - May the Holy One Blessed be He, pay him his reward;

Whereas Gabbai Moshe, has elected to retire from his prestigious position after more than 26 years of exemplary faithful and devoted service to the Congregants of the Young Israel of Chomedey;

Whereas Gabbai Moishe will ברוך continue to be a devoted member of the Young Israel of Chomedey for many years, and continue to serve this community for many years;

Therefore let it be proclaimed throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof

that the Young Israel of Chomedey bestows on Gabbai

**MOSHE LEVINGER**

the title of

**Gabbai Plenipotentiary**

*honoris causa and magna cum laude*

on this day Shabbat Kodesh - the 23rd of Kislev 5780 - Parashat Vayeshev corresponding to Dec 21, 2019 of the common era

and to which we have affixed our hand this day, Friday Dec 20th, 2019

Signed  
Rabbi Avram Berman  
on behalf of the Clergy



Signed  
Isle Bauri, President  
on behalf of the Executive

Once again, thanks to Kohen Gadol Ralph Levine for passing this on.

**NEW SCAM! BEWARE—THIS ONE IS PRETTY SLICK!**

This is very clever. I would probably fall for it if not warned. Give this wide distribution. This scam is actually very clever. Just when you thought you'd heard it all. Be very careful out there!

**Beware of people bearing gifts!**

Wednesday a week ago, I had a phone call from someone saying that he was from some outfit called "Express Couriers" (the name could be any courier company). He asked if I was going to be home because there was a package for me that required a signature. The caller said that the delivery would arrive at my home in roughly an hour. Sure enough, about an hour later, a uniformed delivery man turned up with a beautiful basket of flowers and a bottle of wine. I was very surprised since there was no special occasion or holiday, and I certainly didn't expect anything like it. Intrigued, I inquired as to wh the sender was. The courier replied, "I don't know, I'm only delivering the package."

Apparently, a greeting card was being sent separately. (The card has never arrived!) There was also a note with the gift for a \$3.50 "delivery/verification charge," providing proof that he had not just left it on the doorstep where it could be stolen or taken by anyone, especially a minor. This sounded logical and I offered to pay him cash. He then said that the delivery company required payment to be by credit or debit card only, so that everything is properly accounted for, and this would help in keeping a legal record of the transaction. He added, "Couriers don't carry cash to avoid loss or likely targets for robbery."

My husband, who by this time was standing beside me, pulled out his credit card, and the "delivery man," asked him to swipe the card on a small mobile card machine with a small screen and keypad. Frank, my husband, was asked to enter his PIN number and a receipt was printed out. He was given a copy of the transaction. The guy said everything was in order, and wished us good day.

To our horrible surprise, between Thursday and the following Monday, \$4,000 had been charged/withdrawn from our credit/debit account at various ATM machines. Apparently the "mobile credit card machine," which the deliveryman carried now had all the info necessary to create a "dummy" card with all our card details including the PIN number.

Upon finding out about the illegal transactions on our card, we immediately notified the bank which issued us a new card, and our credit/debit account was closed.

We also personally went to the police, where it was confirmed that it is definitely a scam because several households had been similarly hit.

**WARNING:**

Be wary of accepting any "surprise gift or package," which you neither expected nor personally ordered, especially if it involves any kind of payment as a condition of receiving the gift or package. Also, never accept anything If you do not personally know or there is no proper identification of who the sender is. Above all, the only time you should give out any personal credit/debit card information is when you yourself initiated the purchase or transaction!

**PLEASE - pass this on; it may just prevent someone else from being swindled!**