

## Life As Test

In Israel, when you take buses, wait on lines, and walk the streets, you have plenty of time to watch and observe a veritable kaleidoscope of peoples and cultures all passing before your eyes.

Some weeks ago, I had reason to go to Hadassah Hospital in Ein Kerem.

It was right after Sukkos, and the clinic was packed. The assembled seemed like a cross section of Israeli society: Arabs, Druze, Sefardic and Ashkenazic Jews, males and females, young and old. For myself, I was forewarned there might be a long wait, so I sat back and watched. And in so doing, I reflected upon the scene unfolding in front of me.

Each person was there because they had some medical problem. They all appeared quite ordinary and not particularly distinguished in any way. A young mother with her baby; a son helping his elderly father; husband and wife sitting together holding hands. But, they all had one unspoken challenge in common. Each was attempting to overcome their mortality, the finitude of their individual existence, by seeking some relief from a medical ailment. The paradox was painfully clear. Eventually, some physiological malfunction would mock the most advanced medical technology and death would ensue. And yet, notwithstanding this reality, every person in that waiting room was clearly driven to stretch out their time in this world, to cope with their diagnosis and in so doing, aspire to reach beyond their physical limitations. Their bodies were testing them and they refused to succumb to their medical condition.

And it occurred to me that in that very attempt to transcend physicality, each person had achieved something quite special. They had demonstrated - consciously or not - that they were spiritual beings. Indeed, who knew whether they wouldn't be back in that same clinic, or worse, tomorrow? But, no matter. It still was another day to be with family; another day to work, another day to express in small yet meaningful ways the gestures and deeds, the words and emotions that distinguish man as great and noble, a creature in G-d's Own Image.

There was an important lesson here. In the end, we will all be defeated by death. Yet, inexplicably, we choose to courageously "enter the lists" and push off the finality of it all. We understand that all of life is a test, challenging us to struggle against insurmountable odds, not in the hope of winning, but in the realization that through those very tests, we have the capacity to brush up against eternity and redeem our physical existence with acts of generosity and goodness. Avraham weathered ten tests, and emerged a magisterial and sacred being. The Maccabees brought the Greek cultural juggernaut to a halt. True, it was short-lived; yes, the brothers all eventually die, but not before leaving to posterity - to us - the powerful truism that when the tests of life are engaged, sometimes, just sometimes, a miracle can happen and the course of history is changed forever.

May HaShem give us all the courage to embrace the tests of life and discover how incredibly high we can soar and how truly great we can become.

*With warm greetings from Yerushalayim, Ir HaKodesh. Rabbi J. Bienenfeld*

## Learning Opportunities at Young Israel

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727-1880 (phone), 727-2177 (fax), youngisrael@hotmail.com  
For Men (M); For Women (W); Everyone (E)

<b>Shabbos:</b>	<b>8 AM</b>	<b>Weekly Parsha (E)</b>	<i>Rabbi Alan Green</i>
<b>Sundays:</b>	<b>9 AM</b>	<b>The Book of <i>Ezekiel</i> (M)</b>	<i>Dr. Mitch Wolf</i>
<b>Mondays:</b>	<b>8:15 PM</b>	<b>Paths of the Justice (E)</b>	<i>Uria Teperberg</i>
<b>Tuesdays:</b>	<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>Torah Weekly Portion (W)</b>	
	<b>6:00 PM</b>	<b>Hebrew Mehina (E)</b>	<i>Torah Kollel MiTzion</i>
	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>Hebrew Ulpan (E)</b>	<i>Torah Kollel MiTzion</i>
	<b>8:00 PM</b>	<b>Hebrew Ulpan (E)</b>	<i>Vardit Teperberg</i>
	<b>8:30 PM</b>	<b>Talmud: <i>Sanhedrin</i> (M)</b>	<i>Rabbi Amiel Rosenbloom</i>
<b>Wednesday:</b>	<b>11:15 AM</b>	<b>Weekly Beit Midrash (W)</b>	<i>Vardit Teperberg</i> <i>(home of Faye Newman, 7916 Stanford)</i>
	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>Mesechta Berachot (M)</b>	<i>Dr. Norman Katz</i>
	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>Hebrew Ulpan (E)</b>	<i>Vardit Teperberg</i>
	<b>8:00 PM</b>	<b>Hebrew Ulpan (E)</b>	<i>Vardit Teperberg</i>
<b>Thursdays:</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>	<b>Topics from Parsha (M)</b>	<i>Dov Zeffren</i>

In addition to the above, the **Daf Yomi** (M) is studied every evening at 8:30 PM (Sat., 11/2 before Mincha; Sun., 9 AM) led by Rabbi Amiel Rosenbloom and Rabbi Avi Bloch.

During the year, the synagogue sponsors special Scholar-in-Residence weekends as well as special guest lecturers

The Young Israel Beis Medrash is always open for private or group study.