

TEFILAT YAMIM

PARSHAT BAMIDBAR MEVARCHIM



29 Iyar 5786 - 16 May 2026



Dear Community Family,

A woman, pregnant with twins, visits her doctor. He prescribes her one pill a day, Polite Pills, he calls

them, guaranteed to produce well-mannered children. She figures: if one is good, two must

be better. So she doubles the dose. Then triples it on special occasions.

Nine months pass.
Then ten. Then eleven.
Years go by. Decades.
Her belly grows and
grows. She never gives
birth.

When she finally
passes away, the
doctors open her up
and find two
middle-aged men with
salt-and-pepper
beards, bowing politely
to one another:

"You first!"

*"Oh no, I couldn't
possibly. YOU go first!"*

*"No, no, no. I insist. After
you!"*

Too much politeness.
No one ever got born.

I want to talk to you
this week about a crisis
that is eating our
generation alive. Not
the crisis of division,

though that is real. The
deeper crisis is
something more subtle
and more dangerous:
the crisis of false unity.
The crisis of a world
that celebrates
diversity in theory
while quietly
suffocating it in
practice. A world where
everyone is welcome,
as long as they think,
speak, and feel exactly
the same way.

We have never had
more platforms for
self-expression. We
have never had more
pressure to express
only one acceptable
self. And the Torah, as
always, got there first.

This week's parsha
describes the
encampment of the
Jewish people in the
wilderness. Twelve

tribes, twelve flags,
twelve distinct
positions surrounding
the Tabernacle. Each
tribe had its own
banner, its own
identity, its own place.

The Midrash reveals
something remarkable:
this arrangement was
not invented in the
desert. It was inherited.
Two hundred years
earlier, when Yaakov
Avinu died in Egypt, his
twelve sons carried his
coffin to burial in
Chevron. Each son took
his place around the
coffin instinctively,
according to his own
nature and soul. That
procession, that holy,
organic arrangement
of twelve unique
human beings, became
the blueprint for how
an entire nation would

travel through the wilderness.

Why did Hashem insist on this? Why not one unified camp, one integrated people marching together as one?

Rav Kook addresses this directly in his writings. He teaches that genuine unity is not the erasure of difference; it is the harmonization of difference. True Jewish unity, he writes, is like a symphony, where every instrument plays its own part and it is precisely the multiplicity of voices that creates the beauty. A symphony of identical instruments is not music; it is noise with good manners.

The Torah itself, Rav Kook explains, is singular and indivisible: "One Torah and one law for you." But the paths through which the human soul approaches that Torah are as varied as human souls themselves. In the center of the encampment stood one Mishkan. Around it, twelve distinct tribes. The oneness at the center required the diversity on the outside. It demanded it.

When Yaakov placed his sons around his coffin, he was not creating division. He was recognizing reality. He was saying to each child: I see you. I see who you are. I see the particular song your soul was made to sing,

and I am not asking you to sing someone else's song.

This is why there is not one kind of shul and one kind of minyan and one way to daven. This is not a failure of Jewish unity; it is an expression of Jewish wisdom. If the shuls grow from political strife, from ego and anger and competition, that is a tragedy. But if one shul has one character and one shul has another, and each person finds the place where their soul can breathe, that is not division. That is Yaakov's legacy. That is the twelve flags.

The Pygmalion Effect, discovered in a 1965 Harvard study, demonstrated

something extraordinary: when a teacher genuinely believes a student is capable, that student performs better, even when the teacher tries to hide the belief. We communicate our expectations through a thousand invisible channels, through tone and posture and the look in our eyes. A horse named Clever Hans famously convinced the world he could do arithmetic because he had learned to read the crowd's excitement. When the crowd was blocked from his view, the arithmetic disappeared.

If a horse can feel what you expect of him, imagine what our children feel. Imagine

what our communities feel.

The Golem Effect is the dark mirror: when leadership expects little, when an institution signals subtly that certain people, certain voices, certain paths do not quite fit, those people begin to disappear. Not physically. They just quietly stop bringing themselves.

That is the real cost of false diversity. Not angry confrontation. Just slow, quiet disappearance.

A chossid named Mendel came to his Rebbe in tears, the day after Yom Kippur. He had dreamed that his youngest son, little Chaim'l, would not survive the year. The

Rebbe listened, sighed a heavy sigh, and Mendel walked out convinced the decree had been sealed.

Sukkos came and went. Mendel moved through the days like a ghost, joy unable to reach him. Then came Simchas Torah.

Something shifted. As the dancing began, Mendel looked at himself and recognized what was happening. These thoughts, he realized, belong to the satan. They want to steal from me the only thing I actually have: this moment, this Torah, this joy. And so Mendel began to dance. Not performed dancing. Not polite dancing. His own dancing, urgent and

real, fueled by gratitude for what he had rather than grief for what he feared to lose.

When Mendel came to take leave of the Rebbe afterward, the Rebbe told him: the decree is gone. What tore it up was your simcha. Your genuine, personal, unrepeatable joy.

What is extraordinary about dancing is that it is one of the most universal human acts and one of the most individual. Nobody dances exactly like anyone else. When we each dance our own dance, not the socially acceptable dance, not the dance that signals the right affiliations, but the real one,

Hashem tears up every decree.

We live in a time that speaks constantly about celebrating difference while building systems that quietly punish it. Say the wrong thing and you are not argued with; you are erased. Hold an unfashionable view and you do not lose the debate; you lose your seat at the table. The pressure to perform the correct identity while suppressing the actual one is not freedom. It is Polite Pills. And if we take too many of them, we never get born.

The Torah's answer is not chaos. It is not every person doing whatever they please with no center and no

commitment. The Mishkan stood at the heart of the camp, singular and sacred. The Torah was one. But around that center, twelve flags flew. Twelve ways of being a Jew, twelve ways of carrying the same sacred inheritance.

The path to becoming one is not to flatten ourselves into sameness. It is for each of us to find our flag, stand under it without apology, and trust that when twelve genuine souls surround the Mishkan, something more whole is created.

Believe in yourself.
Believe in the people around you. Let them dance.

Rav Mendel Wuensch

Kiddush Sponsors

Amira & Mordy Rosenberg in honor of the Aufruf and upcoming wedding of their Son Josh Rosenberg, to Hodaya Deyi from Kiryat Shmona. Mazal Tov to the Grandparents Leslie & Sol Rosenberg and Ginger & Roy Pinchot.

Anne and Jonathan Homa on the eighth Yahrzeit of Jonathan's Mother, Anni Homa, and celebrating the birthdays of their Son Gabe and Grandson Matan.

Whiskey sponsorship this week:

Chantal and Nicky Young in honor of their new Grandson in London, the 8th birthday of their Granddaughter Lielle, and Chantal's Mother's Yahrzeit, Simcha bat Shoshana.

Weekday Minyan Schedule

7:30 AM Shachrit @ Beit Chabad Ir Yamim

7:25 PM Mincha/Maariv @ Be Pharmacy On Piano

Shabbat Schedule

Friday

7:09 PM Candle Lighting

7:00 PM Mincha & Kabbalat Shabbat - Dvar Torah by Rav Mendel Wuensch

Shabbat Day

8:30 AM Shachrit - Dvar Torah by Rav Mendel Wuensch

9:45-10:30 AM Kid's Program

10:30 AM Kiddush

11:00 AM Kolot Yamim by Oded Sher

6:00 PM Rabbi David Rue Shiur

7:10 PM Mincha Followed By Seudat Shlishit "Raava D'Ravin" with Rav Mendel Wuensch

8:07 PM Arvit

8:12 PM Shabbat Ends

Weekday Events & Lecture Schedule

9-11 AM Monday Men's Kollel By Rav Mendel Wuensch @ Young Israel Of Poleg,
Hanurit St. 33, Poleg

8:30 PM Monday Sages Of The Ages Series By Rav Mendel Wuensch on "Rav Adin
Even Yisrael Steinzaltz" @ Briga Towers, Ehud Manor 7 Beit Knesset/Tenants Room

10:30 AM Tuesday Family Purity Perspectives By Rebbetzin Itty @ Biscotti For
Women In Childbearing Years

11 AM Wednesday Experience Prayer Series By Rav Mendel Wuensch

Contact Info

Rav Mendel Wuensch - 053-8809063

Rebbetzin Itty Wuensch - 053-2551747

Rami Goldsmith - 054-6742284

Jonathan Gellis - 053-8236143

Location: Chaim Guri School, Corner of Beni Berman & Uzi Hitman Streets,
Entrance On Uzi Hitman Street