

EREV SHABBOS

22 Elul 5786

Friday • September 4, 2026

CANDLE LIGHTING

7:30 PM

Friday • Vaughan, ON

SHABBOS ENDS

8:30 PM

Motzaei Shabbos • Selichos

TORAH READING

Nitzavim-Vayeilech

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 61:10–63:9

PIRKEI AVOS

Chs. 5–6

Last Shabbos of 5786

WE DON'T DO UGLY



Ben “King” Azoulay, 36, who walked into the Kia Center behind an Israeli flag. Tallis and tefillin on a plane; in black; in white.

Photos: Ben Azoulay, from his X profile

A large Israeli flag, held up behind a fighter as he walked out. A black T-shirt with an obscenity against Israel across the chest, on the man following his opponent in. A microphone. A red-and-black swastika flag in the stands, and arms going up in the seats around it. Saturday night, August 29, at the Kia Center in downtown Orlando, a city-owned arena and the home of the Orlando Magic, at the first event of a promotion called “Duel: Arena.”

The card put Paul Nicholas Miller, 38, against Ben “King” Azoulay, 36, a dual Israeli-American citizen and social media personality making his debut. Miller is known to his online followers as “GypsyCrusader.” He has the SS lightning bolts tattooed on his chest. The Anti-Defamation League calls him a “volatile white supremacist-accelerationist.” Five years ago the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force raided his Fort Lauderdale home and found an unregistered short-barreled rifle and hundreds of rounds of ammunition; in 2021 he was

sentenced to 41 months on three federal firearms counts, and prosecutors said he had advocated a “race-based civil war.” He was released in 2023. Former mixed martial artist Jake Shields followed him into the ring in that shirt. Organizers booked the two men to fight each other.

When the final bell sounded, Miller twice raised his arm in a Nazi salute in Azoulay’s direction. The judges gave him a split decision. He took the microphone: “He’s not a tough guy. He’s not some alpha male.” He finished the sentence with an obscenity, the word Jew, and a vulgar insult. Then he turned to the audience and gave the salute two more times.

In the stands a man held up the swastika flag while people sitting near him raised their arms. About half a dozen fights broke out in that section. A venue employee confiscated the flag and the spectator was escorted out.

Azoulay afterwards vowed to “take down every Anti Semite,” and mocked Miller in a crude line over a kick he had taken below the belt.

The Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Florida said: “When Neo-Nazis and open white supremacists are granted a public platform in competitive sports, these are the predictable consequences. We call on those who organized the event to take accountability for facilitating this shameful display.” Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer said: “Hate symbols, including a Nazi flag, were brought into the Kia Center. It was a shameful display that has no place here.” Sen. Rick Scott said: “Antisemitism has no place in Florida.” Marni Mandell, CEO of Shalom Orlando, told WESH 2 she was “completely disgusted and nauseated.”

Orlando Venues, the city department that operates the arena, condemned “all forms of hate speech, discrimination, antisemitism, racism, and any message that encourages hatred or violence against any person or group,” but added that the city cannot deny access to its venues over “political ideology, opinion, or perspective” because of the First Amendment. It said the flag was removed as soon as staff became aware of it and that venue procedures would be reviewed. It did not say how the flag was brought inside or whether Miller’s record had been looked at before the booking.

The Hidden and the Revealed

This Shabbos we read Nitzavim and Vayeilech together, the two shortest portions in the Torah. Nitzavim opens with the whole nation standing to enter a covenant, “you stand this day, all of you, before Hashem your G-d,” the heads of the tribes, the elders, the officers, every man, and with them the ones not standing there, the generations to come. Then Moshe names the danger inside that crowd: “perhaps there is among you a man or a woman or a family or a tribe whose heart turns today from Hashem our G-d,” a man who hears the curses read out and nevertheless “blesses himself in his heart, saying, I will have peace.” He is standing in the crowd with everyone else and hears the same words; his answer is given in his heart, and nobody beside him hears it.

The Torah then describes what the land will look like after the curses have fallen on it. The children of the next generation and a stranger from a distant country look at it, ask why Hashem did this, and are told: because the people forsook the covenant Hashem made with them when He brought them out of Egypt, went and served other gods, and Hashem uprooted them from their soil in anger and cast them into another land. Then the Torah comes back to the man who blessed himself in silence. His heart has turned and nobody knows it. Is the community responsible for him? The answer: “the hidden things are for

Hashem our G-d, and the revealed things are for us and for our children forever, to do all the words of this Torah.”

Rashi reads the verse as an exchange. It opens with an objection from the people, the same one Orlando’s city management raised this week: “and if you say, what is in our hands to do?” The objection, in Rashi’s words: You hold the many answerable for the thoughts of one man, “and no man knows what his fellow hides.” In plain terms, how can a whole community be punished for a sin nobody in it could see?

Hashem’s answer sorts every wrong into one of two kinds. The hidden kind: “I do not punish you for the hidden things; they are Hashem’s, and He will settle with that individual.” A sin kept inside one man is between that man and Heaven, and the community is not held responsible for it. The revealed kind: “but the revealed things are for us and our children, to clear the evil from our midst; and if we do not bring them to judgment, the many are punished.” A sin done in the open is the community’s to answer, and when a community leaves it unanswered, the consequence falls on everyone.

In the Sefer Torah the verse is written with dots above it:

הַנְּסִתֶּרֶת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַנִּגְלֶת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד־עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־
כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת

The hidden things are for Hashem our G-d, and the revealed things are for us and for our children forever, to do all the words of this Torah. The dots, Rashi says, mark when that began: “dotted over the words ‘for us and for our children,’ to teach that even for the revealed things He did not punish the many until they crossed the Jordan, when they took the oath upon themselves at Har Gerizim and Har Eival and became guarantors for one another.” So the community became answerable for what was done in the open from the day it crossed the Jordan. The Gemara in Sanhedrin asks what happened the first time that was tested, and turns to the story of Achan, within days of the crossing.

Achan

The people had just crossed the Jordan under Yehoshua, and Yericho, the first city taken in the Holy Land, fell to them. Yehoshua put it under a ban: the city and everything in it were consecrated to Hashem, its silver, gold, copper and iron were to go into Hashem’s treasury, and nobody was to take anything for himself. (The Sages give two reasons: the first of the conquest was set aside for Hashem the way the first of the dough is set aside, and the city had fallen on Shabbos.) Yehoshua warned that if any man took from what was banned, the whole camp of Israel would fall under the same ban and be brought to ruin.

One man, Achan of the tribe of Yehuda, went into the spoil. In his own words, later, he saw there “a fine Shinar mantle, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, and I coveted them and took them; they are buried in the ground in my tent.” The next town on the line of the conquest was Ai, up in the hills west of Yericho. The men Yehoshua sent to look at it came back saying it was small and two or three thousand would be enough. About three thousand went up, were routed, and “about thirty-six men” fell.

Notice how the Torah reports the theft. One man took the goods, and the verse says “the children of Israel violated the ban,” the whole nation in the plural, and that Hashem was angry with the children of Israel. Nobody in the camp knew why the men of the town of Ai had beaten them. Yehoshua tore his clothes and lay on his face before the holy Ark until evening, asking why Hashem had brought the people across the Jordan at all. The answer came in the same plural: “Israel has sinned,” they have taken from what was consecrated, they have stolen, they have hidden it among their belongings, and the people will not be able to stand before their enemies until what was consecrated is removed from among them.

So the next morning the nation was brought forward for the lot, a drawing in which Hashem, not any man, pointed out the guilty one, and the search narrowed step by step: first the tribes, and the lot fell on Yehuda; then the families of Yehuda, and it fell on Zerach; then the households of Zerach, and it fell on Zavdi; then the men of that household, one by one, and it stopped at Achan. Yehoshua told him to give honour to Hashem and confess. He did: “it is true, I have sinned,” and he listed what he had taken and where it was buried. Messengers ran to the tent, dug up the mantle with the silver under it, and laid everything out before Hashem. Achan was put to death in a valley that has carried his trouble in its name ever since.

The Gemara asks the question the story leaves open. If the hidden things are Hashem’s alone, “why was Achan punished?”

meaning why did thirty-six men pay for what one man buried under his floor. Rabbi Yehuda reads the dots as marking a starting point in time: the many were not answerable even for hidden sins until they crossed the Jordan, and Achan came after the crossing. Rabbi Nechemya reads the verse as written, “forever,” and will not have it: the many are never punished for what is truly hidden. So how, on his reading, could the many be punished for Achan? The Gemara gives his answer: “because his wife and his children knew of it.” A mantle and two hundred shekels of silver under the floor of a family dwelling are hidden from the camp and known to the household. The people who knew said nothing. That is where the Gemara draws the border between the hidden and the revealed: at the first witness who keeps quiet.

The salute in Orlando was given from a ring to a crowd, in a building the city owns, with the lights on and the cameras running. The record behind it was public before the booking: a federal sentence, and a name the Anti-Defamation League had already described. The Torah leaves what is in a man’s heart to Hashem. What was done into a microphone, under a flag, in front of a crowd, is a revealed thing, and the verse says two things about it. Whose it is: “for us and for our children,” the community’s, to deal with. And what it is for: the verse ends with a purpose, “to do all the words of this Torah.” Put plainly: what a man hides in his heart is Hashem’s business and nobody else’s. A Nazi salute given from a ring, in front of a crowd, in a building the city owns, is not hidden. It belongs to everyone who saw it, and the Torah says what they are to do with it: answer it, so that the Torah is kept. When the city says its hands are tied, it is answering the wrong question. Rashi began with the people asking “what is in our hands to do?” and the verse answers them: for what is done in front of everyone, everything is in your hands, and it is yours to do. “and the revealed things are for us and for our children forever, to do all the words of this Torah.” **וְהַנִּגְלֹת לָנוּ וְלִבְנֵינוּ.**

SOURCES

Devarim 29:9–28 with Rashi • Sanhedrin 43b–44a • Yehoshua 6:17–19, 7 • Radak on Yehoshua 6:17 • Washington Post (George, Sept. 2), New York Post (Nesi, Sept. 3), Ynet (Edelson), Algemeiner (Ghermezian), WESH 2 • Photos: Ben Azoulay.

THE ROAD TO 5787 • ELUL 5786 THROUGH TISHREI 5787

ELUL

23 Elul • Sep 5 Selichos begin Motzaei Shabbos, after midnight; then each morning before Shacharis through 29 Elul
29 Elul • Sep 11 Erev Rosh Hashanah

DAYS OF AWE

1–2 Tishrei • Sep 12–13 Rosh Hashanah
3 Tishrei • Sep 14 Tzom Gedaliah
8 Tishrei • Sep 19 Shabbos Teshuvah
10 Tishrei • Sep 21 Yom Kippur

SUKKOS

15–16 Tishrei • Sep 26–27 Sukkos
17–21 Tishrei • Sep 28–Oct 2 Chol HaMoed
22 Tishrei • Oct 3 Shemini Atzeres
23 Tishrei • Oct 4 Simchas Torah

DAILY RAMBAM • SHABBOS • DAY 215

Sefer HaMitzvos: positive commandment 106, **טומאת זבחה**, that a zavah is impure. Mishneh Torah, three chapters: Metamei Mishkav uMoshav 7–9. One chapter: Ishus 9.