

From: [David Kraemer](#)
To: [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)
Subject: FW: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 6.17.20
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From: Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 9:23 AM
To: MOJO210AL <MOJO210AL@aol.com>
Subject: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 6.17.20

WAGON WHEEL CENSUS 5 Runners 3 walkers 3 Cars 1 Truck 1 Bicyclist 1 Motorcyclist

It was when I was 6 years old that I learned about my status in life. It had nothing to do with wealth (we had none), and it had nothing to do with my being white, or even living in Denver, Colorado being able to see the mountains every day. What it had to do with was the responsibility that came with being part of the Jewish people. And it was taught to me that summer in a most peculiar way—as many things that my mom taught were taught in her own peculiar manner. In the summer of 1961, I was just becoming hooked on baseball and daily checked the home run totals for Mantle and Maris. Sometime in July that year, I learned a lesson that has never left me and probably never will. A plane crashed at Stapleton airfield and my mother scoured the news to see if any of the fatalities were JEWISH. I remember asking her what did it matter if they were Jewish and her saying to me—“no one else will care about the Jewish people if we don't care.” And in that moment, my mother taught me about a great rabbinic principle that all Jews are responsible one for the other. There are many things that my mom was and remains (somewhere in that body of hers). Being a Judaic scholar was not one of them. But there was no prouder “Daughter of Israel” than Annie Allen. Rosenzweig might have once remarked that “nothing Jewish is alien to me,” Annie Allen lived it every day of her life. It didn't mean she liked all Jews (or even too many at certain times) in her life. It simply meant that at the end of the day, we had one job in this world and that was to care for them completely. It manifested itself in unique ways. It is nearly impossible to count the number of people who might have ever set foot in Reno or Oak Ridge or Denver or Lincoln or Jerusalem that have eaten at my parents table. While my father might have enjoyed the intellectual rigor of their visit, my mother went to bed convinced that she had done the Jewish people proud.

I tell you all of this because I worry that the Annie Allen's of the world are a disappearing breed. And indeed, the world itself is a very different world than the world she was born into and raised in. The challenges themselves are very different and the lessons of a particularistic orientation to identity development flies in the face of a global and interconnected world. My mom may have been a devoted daughter of Israel-but that devotion led her to engage in serious worldly acts. She raised four kids who care(d) deeply about the larger world and the problems which it faces. Indeed, if you ever had dinner at our table when we kids were growing up, you would have thought our religion was the Democratic party and our God was the Democrat that never was elected. But I digress...

Yesterday was a sad day for me. For many of us, the unfolding narrative concerning the possible annexation or extending of Israeli sovereignty in parts of the West Bank/Judea and Samaria/the Palestinian Territories/Palestine unilaterally strikes deep sorrow and fear and anger within many of us. The lessons that I first remember being taught as a 6-year-old compel me to speak and to act against this. I worked with my local colleagues and drafted an initial statement that I hoped would find resonance across the denominational and ideological diversity of our rabbinate. With the wise counsel of the Minnesota Rabbinical Association's co-chairs, all 42 of us signed onto this statement. It was not written with any hope of influencing the government of Israel, it was written to honor the teachings of my mom. If we don't care, no one will care. (Or the ones who will care will be the ones who seek our total demise.) In doing so, I was dismayed by the hubris of colleagues in Israel and the raw indifference to the plight of world Jewry by friends here locally. As for the hubris of colleagues—they can drink all they want on the deck of Titanic that is losing its bearings with world Jewry. But for my dear American friends,(some of whom are among our closest) how is it possible that we have given up on this most significant moment in Jewish history by simply declaring Israel has no connection to the core of my Jewish identity? It is true, unilateral actions undertaken by the Israeli government will further push Israel into a corner that is increasingly indefensible. But that is where good defense attorneys make their living and their case. And so, indeed, that will remain my avocational interest until the day some 55 years from now () that I die. Professionally, I don't have to address these issues inside a congregation, and I spend my days occupied with issues like health equity and lung cancer funding and economic despair brought on by this pandemic. And I check in with folks in Lake City and Zumbrota and South St Paul and love every minute of it. But in my kishkes and not far from my heart and soul, I mourn not only for the decisions of a country that is interwoven into the fabric of every part of my life, but for the loss of Annie's vision and sense of responsibility for the Jewish people. I don't know if any of the people who died that day on that plane crash were Jewish—but boy did my mom's question impact my life. Morris

(For new readers, I walk every morning for an hour come home and just write for 45 minutes. I don't edit or reread)

Sent by my iPad