

June 28, 2019/25 Sivan 5779

Dear chevreh,

It has been another devastating week for adults and children who are being criminalized for their legal right to seek safety and asylum. If we haven't already, we are becoming further aware of the indefensible treatment of migrants at our southern border. A union representing federal asylum officers stated that this administration's policy of forcing migrants to wait in Mexico while their asylum cases are decided risks violating international treaty obligations and "abandons our tradition of providing a safe haven to the persecuted."

[\[https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/26/us/asylum-officers-trump-migrants.html\]](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/26/us/asylum-officers-trump-migrants.html)

This is what "Never Again" looks like - written on a poster from T'ruah, a rabbinic human rights group of which I am a proud member. Of course, invoking any language that reminds us of the Holocaust pushes buttons. Judy Bolton-Fasman, a Jewish writer whose family fled Cuba asks, "How does that [using Never Again] dishonor the memory of the Holocaust? Those words are an improvised Kaddish—a prayer of mourning—for the 6 million. The words are also a prayer of optimism. When "Never Again" is evoked* it shows that the victims of the Holocaust did not die in vain." <https://www.jewishboston.com/translating-the-holocaust/?fbclid=IwAR0p6i2veLasq006LZLWBC1HPYdJniqwGXzpCMh7oNliKl8tsYPWW9rkGNQ>

*certainly when it's evoked by Jews who are aware of this meaning. When others say it, whether or not they are connecting it to the Holocaust is unclear.

The Jewish people have been refugees for millennia. We know the catastrophic results of turning away refugees. In recent history, in our own country, our people were considered security threats and denied entry, sent back to Europe to be murdered. Loving and not oppressing the stranger appears more than any other value in the Torah. All across progressive Jewish communities, activists are acting *as Jews* in solidarity with others whose lives are at risk and who are seeking freedom and safety.

Locally, there are plenty of ways to get involved. I will mention one that I am close to here:

POWER Bucks has a research group on this topic as we decide what the main focus will be this fall. If you would like to be involved in the immigrant detention, police profiling and incarceration research group, please email either Rev. Moore at revmoore12@icloud.com or Rabbi Strom at elliottstrom@verizon.net. I attended the POWER Bucks meeting last night and there is a lot of energy in the room; we are still in beginning stages so please get involved. The next POWER Bucks Assembly will be Thursday, July 25th, 6:30pm at Yardley United Methodist Church (300 Yardley Langhorne Rd, Yardley).

HIAS writes the following and offers many strategies for making a difference:

https://www.hias.org/take-action?fbclid=IwAR3Dmrf1wqWsu1TGKmOuRNEvm8WCHw_rF_oJx9sD_wSUXz82UwDCZPFxm4

On July 12, join local social justice organizations in helping to shine a light on the inhumane treatment of immigrants in detention camps around the country. You can join a rally at a local detention center by going to LIGHTS for LIBERTY or join local groups Rise Up Doylestown and Indivisible Lambertville/New Hope in Doylestown on July 12th.

Let us identify with our deeply rooted Jewish values, and the best of our American values, and create the kind of world which protects the vulnerable and stands up for justice.

I look forward to seeing you at services at 7:30 pm this evening where I will be speaking about 50 years after Stonewall.

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Diana