

**May 11<sup>th</sup> 2018 / 26<sup>th</sup> of Iyyar 5778**

\*\*\*Shavua tov, everybody. There was a technical problem and this message did not go out before Shabbat but the contents of it still holds after Shabbat. (I took out the "Shabbat Shalom and am adding one updated link to a topical article here: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-embassies-nakba-ramadan-israel-s-roller-coaster-week-awaits-1.6076124>)

Dear chevreh,

This Tuesday evening, May 15<sup>th</sup>, promises to be a powerful evening, one which I encourage you to attend. The screening of *Living While Dying*, by filmmaker Cathy Zheutlin, tells the stories of four friends and loved ones with terminal illness who chose to live out their final days at home with creativity, humor and courage. Following the film there will be a Q&A with the filmmaker, myself, and Jonnie Zheutlin, who is featured in the film.

My heart and thoughts are in Israel and Jerusalem.

It feels as if there are so many wild cards regarding Israel right now. Northern Israel has been the target of bombs in the last 48 hours, and thankfully there have been no casualties. It is unclear if the back and forth bombing will cease, but we pray for safety for Israelis and all civilians.

This Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup> is "Jerusalem Day," which commemorates the reunification of Jerusalem after the 1967 Six Days War, more than fifty years ago. This is usually a tense time in Jerusalem as many people who believe in a two-state solution consider East Jerusalem to be the capital of the future Palestinian state and West Jerusalem to be the capital of the Jewish State. Some hope Jerusalem will be a unique city of peace, one for all of its citizens. This year presents even more complications as this Monday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, the United States will open its embassy in Jerusalem, a controversial move. Additionally, Tuesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, Palestinians commemorate "Nakba" day, recalling the "catastrophe", the losing of the war of 1948 by the Arab countries in the region, leading to 700,000 refugees and the destruction of over 400 Palestinian villages within Israel.

Peace-minded Israelis are creatively finding alternative ways to celebrate *Yom Yerushalayim*. Ron Kronish, the Founding Director the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel, describes one of these events called *Ma'aminim* (Believers). He reports, "It is an inter-religious and intercultural evening of prayer, reflection, singing, and introspection, led by Rabbi Tamar Elad Applebaum, spiritual leader of [Kehillat Zion](#) in Jerusalem, and her friends and colleagues from all over Jerusalem, including Muslims and Christians along with a diversity of Jews. According to Rabbi Tamar, *This program is important since it gives us an opportunity to see with our own eyes that prayer can unite all of us in this holy city. We all care about each other – Jews, Christians and Muslims – and this is one way to show this.* This is the 5<sup>th</sup> year of this inspirational event, which attracts hundreds of Jerusalemites from all walks of life to participate in this unique multicultural celebration of Jerusalem." [The Times of Israel, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018.]

We pray for the safety of Israel and Israelis. We pray that the democratic core of Israel is strengthened by those who have vision. We pray for peace in a region embroiled with hatred and fear.

Rabbi Diana