

1 Tishray 2080—Oct. 1, 2019

Dear Friends,

Elie Weisel used to tell a story about the “Only Righteous Man in Sodom and Gomorrah.” This man—call him Chaim—would carry a big sign on a wooden handle, which read just like the cartoons in my mother’s old *The New Yorker* magazines:

REPENT
THE END IS NEAR

Every day Chaim would march back-and-forth on Sodom’s (or maybe Gomorrah’s) main street, Evil Ways Boulevard. The people of the cities did not bother him, but went about their sinful lives, ignoring Chaim and his message.

One day, a traveler from out of town, finding himself stuck in Sodom after missing his train to Yenne Velt, marveled at Chaim’s determination, but, seeing the character of the people whom he was trying to reach, asked him:

“Excuse me, but why are you wasting your time? These people have chosen to spend their lives doing unrighteous deeds. You’ll never change them.”

Chaim put the sign down, mopped his brow with a red bandanna, and answered,

“Yes, I know that I’ll never change them. I do it because I don’t want them to change *me*.”

I believe this has been a rough year, for both our nation and the world. It is easy to despair of ever changing or improving it (and I am not the most optimistic person, either). Nonetheless, being Jews, our history teaches us that, regardless of evil situations or sinister people, we hope for a better tomorrow. Take a moment to think about yourself, your family, your country, the World, and the Universe, in all of its glory. We may well agree with the Psalmist:

O LORD, our God, how majestic is Your name in all the earth! **You** have set your glory above the heavens. From the lips of children and infants **You** have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. **What is man that you are mindful** of him, the son of **man that you** care for him? But You have crowned humanity with glory and honor (Psalm 8).

As for our wonderful temple, we are on the move. I hope that, in temple this Yuntef, you will marvel, as I do, at the singing and teaching abilities of our versatile, warm, and enthusiastic cantor, Javier Smolarz. We have new office staff, as well, and everyone is working hard under the leadership of our hardworking president Rita Fleming-Klein to insure that our temple runs as smoothly as possible.

Here at Temple Sholom, we pray, learn, schmooze, and nosh together, as a good Jewish congregation must do. Our membership runs the gamut from traditional to secular; we can accommodate Jews of all types.

Make this the year that you either renew, or sign up for, membership in Temple Sholom. Remember the words of Rabbi Hillel the Great in the 1st Century:

“It is not incumbent upon you to serve on the Temple Board, but we would be happy if you took part in a Committee. Or, just come around sometime, and daven!”

At least, I think that’s what he said, more or less. Anbeth joins me in wishing you and yours to be inscribed and sealed for a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year 5780!

With Love of Israel and Humanity,

Rabbi David Hartley Mark