

Rabbi's Column

Sunday night I participated in another community's first Yizkor service. They didn't call it that, but that is what it was.

Wyoming Equality held a memorial service for those killed at the Pulse night club last year. The clergy who were invited last year were again invited, and all the rest of them were out of town or had other engagements.

The branch in Florida asked any group who were planning on doing any memorials to focus on what they can do in the memory of the slain to help prevent similar massacres in the future, and to thereby help this small subset of humanity feel safe.

I definitely empathize with that goal. That is also the concept of Yizkor. Within each Yizkor paragraph is a statement that says "in their memory I do righteousness."

There are many more things that could be said. Most of them were said far better by the various individuals found on this webpage: <https://www.keshetonline.org/resources/jewish-voices-after-orlando/>

On Sunday, August 6, the City of Cheyenne will begin their 150th Anniversary week with an interfaith service at 10 am at the Civic Center. More details will follow throughout the coming weeks.

A tiny bit of Torah: 10 of the 12 forward scouts (we usually call them spies) looked at the people they saw in the Land of Canaan and did something quite human. They decided that the people they saw must see them in the same fashion that they still thought of themselves as being. They actually went a bit further. Instead of saying, "All those people thought of us as merely people habituated to slavery" they said, "We were like grasshoppers to them, and that is how they saw us." That infectious low self image is why we had to wait another generation to get into the Land. The important part is not how the population of the country viewed us - the important part is always how we view ourselves. [You can go overboard the other way in this, which does not make it any less important.]

It is like the advice given quite often over time. A person often has at least two pockets. In one should be the message, "For my sake the world was created." In the other should be the message, "I am but dust and ashes." The healthiest thing to do is pull out the positive one when things are going poorly, and pull out the negative one when everything is working out right. To be a complete mensch, one should also have a hidden pocket which is very difficult to access - in that one you can put your anger, in order to be a little more like God, one of whose attributes is taking a long time to get angry.

May the world allow us all to be calm this week.