

SUMMER

# SONS OF JACOB SYNAGOGUE



## Services with Rabbi Rebecca

**Final Summer Shabbat Service**  
(Synagogue members only; by invitation)  
Fri, Aug 8, 6pm with Rabbi Rebecca  
Kushner, at the home of Sarah Stokes

**First Autumn Services following  
the High Holidays:**  
SOJ, 715 Progress Ave, Waterloo IA  
Friday, October 31, 7:30pm  
Saturday, November 1, 9:30am

**The High Holidays are  
next month. See next  
page for complete  
schedule.**

- Rosh Hashanah Tuesday, September 23, 2025.
- Erev Yom Kippur/Kol Nidre, Wednesday, October 1, 2025,
- Yom Kippur, Thursday, October 2, 2025.

**Ol' Kockers Men's Coffee Club**  
**August 6th at 10am, Panera,**  
**1818 La Porte Rd, Waterloo, IA**

## Game Day With David

**Wed. August 13th, 12 to 2pm.**

**Let Shirley or David know if  
you're available.**

**No Board Meeting this month.**

**The next Board meeting is  
September 15 at 6:30pm**



**SEE INSIDE TO LEARN  
ABOUT BABY ELINOR,  
DAVID LEDERMAN'S  
NEWBORN  
GRANDDAUGHTER**



**SEE INSIDE FOR  
JACOB LEDERMAN'S  
ESSAY ON HIS LATEST  
TRIP TO ISRAEL**



# High Holidays Schedule

All services, with the exception of Tashlich, are at Sons of Jacob Synagogue (SOJ), 715 Progress Avenue, Waterloo, IA 50701.

## Rosh Hashanah:

**Tuesday, September 23, 2025**

9:30 am Morning Services, SOJ.

We will dip apples and honey and serve a light lunch following services.

4:00 pm Tashlich, the Symbolic Casting Off of Sins, Hope Martin Park, 276-286 Fletcher Ave., Waterloo, IA 50701.

## Erev Yom Kippur:

**Wednesday, October 1, 2025**

7:00 pm Kol Nidre, SOJ

## Yom Kippur:

**Thursday, October 2, 2025**

9:30 am Morning Service, SOJ

5:00 pm Afternoon & Concluding Service, SOJ

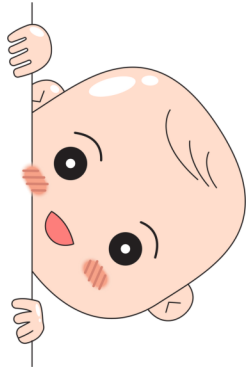
7:00 pm Break-the-Fast (vegetarian pizza), SOJ



Rabbi Ora Simon Schnitzer,  
Highland Park IL

We are excited to welcome Rabbi Ora Schnitzer, from metropolitan Chicago, back to SOJ to lead our High Holiday services. Rabbi Ora was born in Waterloo when her father, Rabbi Mordecai Simon of blessed memory, served Sons of Jacob (1956-1963). Officiating at our High Holiday services since 2018, Rabbi Ora always has something inspiring to say.

Services are free of charge for all Jews in our community. For security and planning, please RSVP for Rosh Hashanah by Monday, September 15 & RSVP for Yom Kippur by Wednesday, September 24. Just call Shirley Davis, our Office Assistant, at 319 233-9448, or e-mail us at [soj.iowa.office@gmail.com](mailto:soj.iowa.office@gmail.com)



# *Congratulations*



David & Amy Lederman  
on the birth of your second grandchild



Elinor Violet Lederman was born on June 13th, 2025 in Denver Colorado.

She weighed 5lbs, 1oz and was 18 inches. She was a little early but very healthy.

Drew and Destiny Lederman named Elinor after Drew's Great Grandmother, Elinor Kalinich.



# Watching war from the inside during my family's June 2025 visit to Israel

By Jacob Lederman



Jacob Lederman

On June 11, our family departed for Israel. We were excited because the purpose of our visit was a happy one; we were attending a family wedding.

The trip started out with the conventional hassles of international travel. We had some difficulties with the airlines and almost missed our flight out of Paris, finally landing in Ben Gurion airport on the afternoon of June 12. There was a delay getting to our apartment in Modiin because roads were closed in anticipation of a 5-kilometer run that night.

Finally, we got settled in and went to dinner at my cousin Israel's home. We met up with my brother, Josh, there. Josh was looking forward to his family's arrival on Friday after having spent the prior week volunteering. Josh and I were delighted to see Israel but also curious about what he thought would happen in the immediate future. Did he think there might be a war with Iran? Was he worried about how tension with Iran might impact the family wedding the following week?

Cousin Israel patiently reassured us that he did not think that Israel and Iran would be at war soon. His reasons were sound: Schools remained in session. Bibi's son had a wedding planned for the following week. I was too jet lagged and excited to recall



## Watching war from the inside by Jacob Lederman continued

what the third reason had been. It was time to enjoy a vacation in Israel, appreciating the many historic sites, beautiful beaches, great food, and family events associated with the wedding.

At 3am (on Friday the 13th no less), it seemed like our dreams had been dashed. The sirens wailed! Those of you who have been to Israel know that a “mamad” is a protected residential space, a reinforced room in Israeli apartments and houses. We had been instructed where to find the safe room or mamad in the apartment. Chris and I gathered our children and went to Abby’s bedroom. It so happened that Abby was sleeping in the room which doubled as a mamad. The children were calm but understandably, they had questions. Chris and I assured them that we were safe and we were responding appropriately, just like all the Israelis in the vicinity were doing.

After 15 minutes during which we texted Israel’s family, we finally went back to our own beds. As you can imagine, we were unable to sleep. My mind was filled with anxious thoughts about what might happen next. Jet lag made it worse. I went out for an early morning walk with Meyer. Then, I had a late morning walk with Abby to purchase supplies at a grocery store.



Jacob & Abby Lederman

## Watching war from the inside by Jacob Lederman continued

There was nothing normal about this family vacation. Our night in the maman was followed by a week of sirens, sleep deprivation, daytime naps and anxious anticipation about when the next alert or siren would sound.

On Friday morning, Israel shut down. Schools, airports, museums, beaches, and restaurants were closed. Josh's family would not arrive. The wedding plans were thrown into question. We had nowhere to go and nothing to do but worry.

That Friday evening, we had another family dinner. Most of the family attended. My cousin, Erez was stuck in Cyprus. He had gone to Croatia for a short business trip with a planned return scheduled for Friday morning. His flight to Ben Gurion, was diverted to Larnica, Cyprus. He was forced to remain in Larnica for a week before managing to get a flight back into Israel. In fact, Erez returned on the first flight allowed back into the country on Friday, June 20.



Family inside Israel's mamad or safe room

Sirens remained a major part of our lives. On June 14, two sirens interrupted dinner. Everyone gathered inside Israel's mamad, which is a laundry room. There were fourteen of us in all, cramped inside the tiny laundry room.

## **Watching war from the inside**

### **by Jacob Lederman continued**

Fortunately, we remained in good spirits. We were in Modiin, east of Tel Aviv, and so we knew that we were not targeted by the Iranian missiles. There were Iron Dome, Patriot, David's Sling batteries all around us. We continued to hear the thump, thump, thump as anti-missile rockets were fired off to intercept incoming missiles from Iran.

The daytime routine was established. After the early morning sirens, I did not go back to sleep. Instead, I grounded myself by taking a walk around the city. Of course, the tourist in me was hoping to find a now-harmless piece of shrapnel from a downed missile, a real souvenir to take home to Iowa. I never got that lucky! Typically, my walking tour was followed by a nap later that day. This sequence went on repetitively: sirens blasting at night; sleepless nights; groggy days. Occasionally, there were sirens during the day but fortunately this was not often.

We would go to Palmachim beach on some days. We had to break the rules a little to do this. The beaches were closed. To enter, we squeezed ourselves through a fence. We were not alone. There would be about twenty other people nearby along a 500-yard stretch of beach. I felt it was safe enough. Along the road as we get close to the beach, we would often see Patriot anti-missile batteries along the ridge, close to the road. During the first two days we had visited the beach, we were able to play together in the active, high surf. During the next three days, the surf was much calmer and the jellyfish arrived. Jack and I were able to dig out some nice shells from the shallow rocky area of the beach.

## Watching war from the inside by Jacob Lederman continued

Because many restaurants were closed, I never got to enjoy my favorite Israeli breakfast, a delicious meal of eggs, cheeses, and coffee. This may have upset me more than hearing the missiles! Thank goodness, I could still get shawarma from a popular restaurant that retained take-away service, even though nobody was allowed to dine inside. Without shawarma, I might have taken up arms!

To break up the monotony we took a trip to the Dead Sea. It was relatively calm there; no sirens I had been told. While checking in to get access to the hotel pool and seaside, I see Tel Aviv residents checking in too. They had arrived to find refuge from the nightly missiles landing in their city.

The Dead Sea has always been nice. As I remember, the air was hot and the shallow water was even hotter. It was crazy. We spent the days by the Sea and afterward, we found an Arab restaurant that would allow indoor seating. There, we were served several grilled meats and of course salads galore.



Dead Sea



## **Watching war from the inside**

### **by Jacob Lederman continued**

As we set our forks down, a rare siren went off causing everyone in the restaurant to be herded into the storage room, their mamad. While in the mamad, two young women who appeared to be English began to sing quietly. It was reassuring to listen to them. We sheltered there for 30 minutes, cracking jokes. My Israeli cousins, who share my quirky sense of humor, suggested that Iran might be targeting me directly. As you may recall from my previous two guest essays in the Sons of Jacob Bulletin last year, I had volunteered on an IDF naval base which suffered a drone attack a week later. History repeated itself.

Now, I was in Kfar Shumel with my family when Iran decided to launch 300 rockets, missiles, and drones our way. My cousins made me wonder. Had I upset someone somewhere in Iran? Had the Ayatollah been reading my Instagrams?

The next day, we had planned to go to Jerusalem and visit the Old City. But now, the Old City was closed to everyone but residents. But we had a critical mission. Jack would receive his tallit at the Wall, one way or another!

A year before. I had met, Zak Mishirky, a Christian Arab from the Old City. He has a shop there so I decided to ask him for help. He was happy to try to help us get inside the Old City. After two rejected attempts and frustration, we were successful at long last! We had a private walking tour of the Old City devoid of tourists and shop keepers. The quiet was inspiring. Unfortunately, we could not stop for too long anywhere or we would get hassled by the police.

## **Watching war from the inside** **by Jacob Lederman continued**

So, we kept moving along. It was strange to see the alleyways of the Old City empty. A few children played. A couple of grocery stores were open. But that was it! None of the souvenir shops or restaurants were open. We felt sorry for the employees and business owners. These people were hurting.

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Old City

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## **Watching war from the inside**

### **by Jacob Lederman continued**

The Kotel was closed off. Absolutely no one was allowed there. We were able to get close, close enough to see it, but not touch it. We refused to feel defeated. Given the circumstances, we were successful in our own way. Jack recited the prayer for the tallit, and it was placed around his shoulders. As we were wrapping up, a Hasidic rabbi approached. He became involved in our family ceremony and provided a little legitimacy to the tallit ritual. It was icing on the cake. For lunch, Jack wanted McDonald's and he got it!

The next morning, we heard a siren at 7am. We did not retreat from normal activities. By 8am, we went to the Aroma café. Restrictions had been eased the night before so some shops were opening. It felt unreal. Just a couple hours ago and for several days beforehand, sirens had become a routine part of our lives. Now, it was peaceful and our lives felt normal. But that's how life is! That is how human beings survive. We just keep going, adapting, and trying our best.

And better still, I did not leave hungry. I got my favorite Israeli breakfast with Abby that morning! More precious moments followed. That evening, we had another dinner with family. Cousin Erez had been able to get back into Israel. He and his family were at the dinner as were Ariel, the groom-to-be, and his family. Ariel has a sister, Galit and two brothers, Nir and Daniel. His brothers are IDF soldiers. Both were in Gaza recently, Daniel has fought in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza: three battles in a month's time. When I looked at the faces of these young men, there were no signs that they had experienced the ravages of war. Instead, they were relaxed, friendly, quick to smile, and approachable.

## Watching war from the inside by Jacob Lederman continued

They told us about some of the tactics used in the fighting in Israel. We felt lucky to hear their insights enjoyed their company immensely.

Finally, there were no sirens. It was the first night since we had arrived in Israel when the night was quiet. But the unexpected silence would not last long. The next day, the Iranians were back at it.

By Saturday, June 21, our family had been in Israel for nine days. As you can imagine those nine days felt more like nine weeks. We decided to take a trip to the north (just Meyer, Josh Israel, and I). We saw sites that were closed or empty, but we felt relief in having the opportunity to get out of town again and do something. While winding our way up Mt. Bantal, we came in view of an IDF base on a ridge. At that moment. we watched as two streaks of smoke flew upward from the base! Amazing timing. We saw two anti-missiles flying toward an unseen target. Later that day, we read of an intercepted drone in that area and we got to see the battery that took it out! Not too long afterwards, we heard the siren (and I was uncertain of why we had not heard a siren earlier). We were not too worried. We saw a shelter alongside the road and went to it. We took a couple pictures to show family back home that we were safe. That afternoon, we ate at a Druze restaurant called Foccasia. There was another feast of meats and salads and special Druze bread.



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## **Watching war from the inside**

### **by Jacob Lederman continued**

The next day, we went to Ramat Yishay, and visited the home of Uri and Annat, Israel's friends. Their home had a swimming pool and was located near Ramat David Air Force base. What a contrast of experiences! While we were soaking in the pool, we heard and watched loaded F-16's flying towards Iran. I have always appreciated hearing and seeing these powerful jets. Now, I felt in awe, seeing these planes loaded with munitions, on their way to destroy military targets.

I continued to cope by taking walks, which were especially enjoyable when my brother, Josh was available. We would walk around the mall which was open, but not for shopping, and then go somewhere for coffee. Restrictions had been put back in place, and there was no seating at restaurants. This morning, around 9am, the sirens went off again! We found ourselves in the mall's emergency shelter, which doubled as a small theatre for children's plays. We waited for 30 minutes on the small stage until there was an all-clear message.

Finally, there was an overnight Ceasefire on Tuesday. A little Theatre from Iran had been hitting an American base in Qatar. But that was prearranged as we have seen before. The war with Iran was effectively over!

During the previous week, many people left Israel. They travelled to Amman in Jordan or Sharm-el-Shek in Egypt. I would not do that because, as I told my friends and children: "We stand with Israel!"

## **Watching war from the inside** **by Jacob Lederman continued**

Once the war was over, the Israeli national carriers were back in business. With the help of Koren, my cousin Metial's husband, who works for El Al, we were able to secure tickets to Barcelona on Arika. Thank you, Koren!

We returned home on June 27, only two days past our original return date. I keep on reflecting on our experiences. We went to Israel to celebrate with family and ended up also watching war from the inside, experiencing what it was like to be typical Israelis in these tumultuous times. I hope we never have to go through anything like this again. Our experiences have made us even more appreciative of the courage of the Israeli people.



*Words of Wisdom from Rabbi Kushner*

## **Always Only One Earring**



Rabbi Rebecca Kushner

History fades quickly from memory and actual fragments of ancient calamities are precious. As the most tragic day in the Jewish calendar approaches, the 9th of Av (which falls this year on August 2nd), let's turn to the historians and the archaeologists to help us frame this event.

King Zedekiah, the 12th and final king of Judah, had been installed by King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylonia. However, angered by the high tribute payments expected of him by Nebuchadnezzar, King Zedekiah formed an alliance with Egypt instead. This rebellion was viewed as a direct challenge to Babylonian power.

Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem for 30 months. The siege resulted in the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of Solomon's Temple, and the deportation of many of Jerusalem's inhabitants to Babylon in 586 BCE.

The agony, fear, starvation and horrifying depravation of Jerusalem's population is illustrated in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, "Eicha," that we read each year on this commemoration date.

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## *Words of Wisdom from Rabbi Hushner continued*

### Lamentations of Jeremiah, “Eicha,”



Alas!  
Lonely sits the city  
Once great with people!  
She that was great among nations  
Is become like a widow;  
The princess among states  
Is become a thrall.  
I cried out to my friends,  
But they played me false.  
My priests and my elders  
Have perished in the city  
As they searched for food  
To keep themselves alive.  
See, O LORD, and behold,  
To whom You have done this!  
Alas, women eat their own fruit,  
Their new-born babes!  
Alas, priest and prophet are slain  
In the Sanctuary of the Lord!

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## *Words of Wisdom from Rabbi Hushner continued*

It's easy for many of us to forget that history isn't merely something written in a book; history happens to ordinary people. The horrific floods in the Texas Hill Country just a few weeks ago still sting us with their narratives. Newspaper articles, internet clips, interviews with survivors, drone images: these all serve to put a face on tragedy.

However, going back in time to 586 BCE, marking this day when we should traditionally be fasting and mourning the loss of Solomon's Temple (besides other gruesome events in Jewish history that happened around this same date) is not so easy. Where are the interviews? Where are the images? We have the accounts in our Hebrew Bible in Kings and in Chronicles, the prophet Jeremiah's testimony which we find largely confirmed in the historian Josephus' writings, but have we nothing else to help bring this closer to us?

Yes, we indeed do: we have the silent testimonies that the archaeologists present to us, for which I am very grateful. The Mount Zion Archaeological Project has for years been sifting diligently through layer after layer of material. Shimon Gibson, spokesperson for this project, mentioned that: "It's the kind of jumble that you would expect to find in a ruined household following a raid or battle." Pottery shards, ashes, clay lamps, spearheads and intriguingly: one single beautiful earring.

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*Words of Wisdom from Rabbi Hushner continued*

## One single beautiful earring



To whom did it belong? One of Jerusalem's elite families, now put in chains and dragged off to exile in Babylon? Who was she? Did she ever find her other earring in all the chaos?



**We read in Psalm 137: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right-hand wither; let my tongue stick to my palate if I cease to think of you, if I do not keep Jerusalem in memory even at my happiest hour."**

Wishing all of us much happier hours,  
Rabbi Rebecca

We gratefully acknowledge the following contributions  
**Yahrzeits August 2025**

David & Amy Lederman in Memory of his Mother, Barbara Lederman  
Josh Lederman Family in Memory of his Parents, Sid & Barbara Lederman  
Robert & Lisa Myers in Memory of their Father Sidney Myers &  
Grandmother 'Bubbe' Sophie Myers

Arthur Ratute in Memory of his Aunt Rosalyn Ratute  
Dr. Myron & Carol Kanofsky in Memory of Grandmother Nettie Widerschein  
Donna Leviton in Memory of her Mother Elizabeth Epstein Cohn

**July 27<sup>TH</sup> - Aug 2nd**

Mary Rosenthal  
Ida Kramer  
Max R. Reinstein  
Frank Greenberg  
Maurice L. Ritter  
David Guralink  
Charles Tenenbaum  
Beatrice Cooper  
Louis Cooper  
Lena Lachman  
Anne Wolfe

**Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> - Aug 9th**

Sarah Fish  
Jack Meadow  
Ezrel David Offman  
Sarah Slone  
Maurice Saiger



**Aug 10<sup>th</sup> - Aug 16<sup>th</sup>**

Sarah Blott  
Eva Buk Kazenelson  
Abe Goldstein  
Ruth Alpern  
Nettie Widerschein  
Edward Kramer  
Marion Krupkin  
Joseph 'Joe' Blot

**Aug 17th - Aug 23rd**

Maxine Fratrik  
Nathan Harris  
Yitzchok Mayer Nathanson  
Craig Zucker  
Murray Zucker  
Jean Cohn

**Aug 24<sup>th</sup> - Aug 30<sup>th</sup>**

Abraham Poteszman  
Jackie Sinykin  
Maxine Cohn  
Goldie Levine  
Ruth Serber  
Sarah Cohen  
Irene Cohn  
Ezra Stanet Hurwich