



## “WELCOME TO HOLLAND”

October 2022

"I came to comfort and left comforted, I came to inspire and left inspired, I came to give strength and left strengthened". (Holy Scriptures). As your Chaplains, we are honored and humbled to be able to be there for you in time of need, as an ear to listen or shoulder to lean on. But we can't tell you, how many times, the above words of the Holy Scriptures come to life , where we come to comfort and assist ,and walk away inspired and strengthened. Please let me share one of those

moments with you.

Standing on line in Dunkin Donuts for a cup of coffee recently, one of our members walked in stood in line next to me and we started chatting about life's challenges. Then he brought up the subject of raising a child with 'special needs', "not easy" he said, "but G-d blessed me with this child and it has taught me so much about what is 'really' important in life" . Then he took out a piece of paper from his pocket and said "here, read this when you have a moment, and please pass it along". I went back to my car, read the message, and I realized that we never know the challenges and burdens that others carry in their hearts and lives. I would be remiss if I did not pass along this powerful story.....Here it is, titled, "Welcome to Holland"..

A Mom writes, I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this.....

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting. After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland. "Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy. "But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay. The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place. So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met. It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts. But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned. "And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away... because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss. But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland.....mm

## "Welcome to Holland (Part 2)"

I have been in Holland for over a decade now. It has become home. I have had time to catch my breath, to settle and adjust, to accept something different than I'd planned.

I reflect back on those years of past when I had first landed in Holland. I remember clearly my shock, my fear, my anger—the pain and uncertainty. In those first few years, I tried to get back to Italy as planned, but Holland was where I was to stay. Today, I can say how far I have come on this unexpected journey. I have learned so much more. But, this too has been a journey of time. I worked hard. I bought new guidebooks. I learned a new language and I slowly found my way around this new land. I have met others whose plans had changed like mine, and who could share my experience. We supported one another and some have become very special friends. Some of these fellow travelers had been in Holland longer than I and were seasoned guides, assisting me along the way. Many have encouraged me. Many have taught me to open my eyes to the wonder and gifts to behold in this new land. I have discovered a community of caring. Holland wasn't so bad. I think that Holland is used to wayward travelers like me and grew to become a land of hospitality, reaching out to welcome, to assist and to support newcomers like me in this new land. Over the years, I've wondered what life would have been like if I'd landed in Italy as planned. Would life have been easier? Would it have been as rewarding? Would I have learned some of the important lessons I hold today? Sure, this journey has been more challenging and at times I would (and still do) stomp my feet and cry out in frustration and protest. And, yes, Holland is slower paced than Italy and less flashy than Italy, but this too has been an unexpected gift. I have learned to slow down in ways too and look closer at things, with a new appreciation for the remarkable beauty of Holland with its tulips, windmills and Rembrandts. I have come to love Holland and call it Home. I have become a world traveler and discovered that it doesn't matter where you land. What's more important is what you make of your journey and how you see and enjoy the very special, the very lovely, things that Holland, or any land, has to offer. Yes, over a decade ago I landed in a place I hadn't planned. Yet I am thankful, for this destination has been richer than I could have imagined! End of story. What a powerful message....."Don't let your journey end, due to an unexpected change of destination".

Quote of the day.. "Sometimes, the only way G-d can show us HE is control, is to put us in situations WE can't control"..... hmmm. Remember "Life is a gift, enjoy your present!"

On behalf of ALL your Chaplains, May G-d bless you and keep you safe. A blessed and safe month to you and your loved ones. Should you need a shoulder to lean on, an ear to listen, or perhaps some good humor to share, don't hesitate to give us a call.

Compliments of your Chaplain, Rabbi Moshe Wolf

773-463-470 or e-mail: [moshewolf@hotmail.com](mailto:moshewolf@hotmail.com)