

## The Finger of God Maybe - Maybe Not



By William Rabinowitz

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The process to take a picture was more effort that I expected. Calling a synagogue means getting by the guard who answers the telephone, frequently a gruff, retired former New York female prison guard with a severe sore throat.

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Perhaps a micro – second goes by, “NO, and we don’t want to buy any either.”

“I am not selling anything. I am asking if you have any Holocaust Memorials such as markers windows, plaques, etc.”

“We just want to take a picture for our archives.” I try to get in fast knowing my chances of talking are diminishing rapidly.

“No, and we don’t have anything, and we don’t have money to buy anything.” The phone slams down.

I gave up on the phone guard and went straight for the Rabbi or the Executive director when calling. My odds improved. If I managed to connect and ask the question, I asked permission to come by and take a picture. The deep suspicion remained with them as we. If they had anything, I was told it was OK. but only if I could prove who I was and only at an appointed time.

All of this just brought a polite rolling of my eyes on my end of the phone but I complied. What really helped was being referred. A Rabbi in Deerfield told me he had seen an incredible Holocaust Memorial at the Chabad synagogue in Ft. Lauderdale on Ocean Blvd. He said he had never seen anything like it. An entire wall of names of Holocaust camps and places had been carved in marble for eternity. It stood eight feet high.

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“Hello, my name is William Rabinowitz...” I went into my *spiel*. The young voice seemed a bit bored with the request but said I was welcome to come and take a photograph of the memorial. Happy, that was all I wanted to do anyway.

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The doors opened easily. I did not have to be buzzed in or patted down by armed security as I had encountered at other South Florida synagogues and Jewish schools. The conscious fear of malevolence against Jews was not here. Entering through the foyer, I walked past the small synagogue entrance with the moveable chairs and impressive center wooden dark stained *bemah*. In the back of the building, a large anti-room, reception area, with the administrative counter and office area opened up. A large protecting picture of the Rebbe gazed upon the entire area.

I walked up, introduced myself and asked about the Holocaust Memorial. Fortunately, they vaguely remembered I was coming.

With a simple gesture, the young woman, semi hidden by telephones, computers, office cabinets and papers pointed directly in back of me. The Memorial was there. A custodian turned on a few light for me to see it better. Nearly half of the ante-room's wall that was the back of the synagogue was the Memorial. It was a rich rose colored single marble slab with natural colors of rust and beige flowing across. Row upon row, line upon line was carved into the marble with simple names of camps, sub-camps, places of terror and the horror of the Holocaust.

It was stunning in its simplicity and its power. I had never seen anything like it before. The closer I walked to it the more and more the names jumped at me. Names of places unknown, places I could not pronounce places that few scholars probably even knew about. The names ran without end from floor to ceiling and from side to side.



I took out my little digital Panasonic Lumix camera and started taking picture upon picture. I was a curiosity to the ladies watching and working. A courteous goodbye and I return to Boynton Beach to process the images and forward them to my friend for his archives.

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Enlarging my picture, I saw a person appear. Imagination and wishful thinking is a powerful delusory director. But, I had no such imaginings. I was just taking a picture. There was something else in the Memorial. The person was an old man, a characterized sharp nosed man with a scraggly beard wearing a Tallis and holding a Torah.

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“Sheila, do you see a person here?”

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O.K. she has accused me of creative imagination and lately descending into Alzheimers when I went to the Publix and could not remember what it was she wanted. Me and half of the retired men in Boynton Beach spent our afternoons in front of the dairy cases at a Publix in our tan colored Bermuda shorts on the phone with our wives.

“What kind of sour cream did you want? 1% fat or 2% fat? What was that brand again? Publix is \$.06 cheaper.”

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“No, I don’t see anything William. Are you sure you just want to see something? She asked.

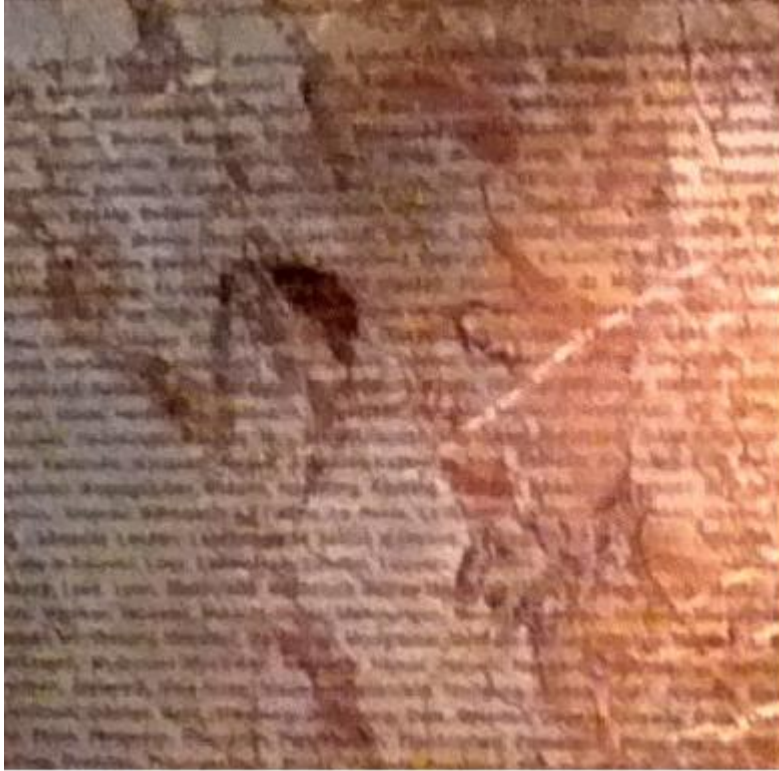


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“Sheila, look again. Do you not see the little boy with the black *kepah* on his head?”

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“William, I know what you would like to think is there. Maybe your suggesting what is there to me is helping my imagination see something that is just a distortion of light. But if you want to believe that in that Holocaust Memorial is an image of an old man and a little boy that is fine by me.”

She went off to watch the Maury Show with its drama of “You are the Father” from DNA testing of multiple partners.

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The young administrator remembered my coming in the day before. I told her about what I saw.

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Through the wonderful communication abilities of Al Gore’s amazing internet I sent her the computer images of the Holocaust Memorial and what I saw. I called again an hour later.

“Did you receive the pictures?” I asked her.

“Yes,” she answered. “I have been sitting here for months and I never saw what you just shared with me. I had to go over to the Memorial and turn on the lights. I had to focus on the area you suggested but not stand too close. I saw the little boy. It is something.”

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“Did the marble carver put the images in the Memorial?” I asked.

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Either this is an incredible coincidence that this particular piece of stone should be your Holocaust Memorial or it is not,” I said to her.

“Nothing is a coincidence, G-d has no coincidences.” She affirmed quickly. But still she was not particularly concerned about the uniqueness of this Memorial.

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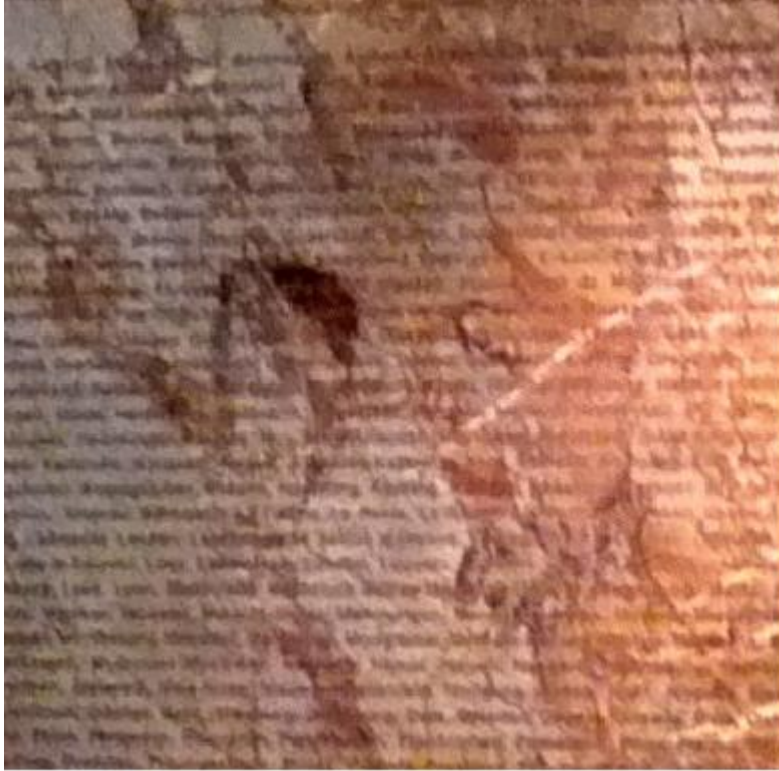


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