



## Reverend Katz Library

### New Book Reviews

April 2024

As Pesach approaches, we look forward to the days after the festival, when we will have time to relax with a good, thought-provoking book. These are the books received this month. Please come to the Rev Katz Library to make your selection from our varied collection.

#### **Rabbi Menachem Creditor and Sarah Tuttle Singer eds. *When we turned within: Reflections on Covid -19* LIT CRE**

Struggling with the ups and downs of a global pandemic, journalist and author Sarah Tuttle-Singer and scholar in residence at UJA-Federation of New York Rabbi Menachem Creditor teamed up to create a compilation of reflections from Jews around the world so that they could connect in isolation.

The result is an anthology titled “When We Turned Within: Reflections on COVID-19,” with all proceeds going to UJA-Federation New York’s COVID-19 relief fund.

“Whenever there’s been a point of heartbreak and a need for reflection within the Jewish and global community, Rabbi Creditor is so good at bringing people together around that,” Tuttle-Singer said.

“Three weeks ago he reached out to me to ask if I would help be an extra pair of eyes on an anthology of a Jewish response and Jewish adjacent response to the COVID-19 crisis.”

The two crowdsourced Jews of all backgrounds and experiences to share how they have been navigating the pandemic, protests in response to the death of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and quarantine. Within a week, Tuttle-Singer and Creditor “were flooded with such wonderful stories, poems, prayers [and] reflections of various Torah portions during that time,” Tuttle-Singer said. They received hundreds of submissions from Jews and non-Jews in the United States, Israel, Canada, the United Kingdom and Sweden.

Their mutual friend and artist, Rabbi Karen Byer Silberman, illustrated the cover, which displays a boat weathering a storm. Creditor said that very analogy is scattered throughout the book as contributors used the theme to describe this unprecedented period in history.

#### **Rabbi Menachem Creditor and Sarah Tuttle Singer eds. *When we turned within (Vol 2): Spiritual reflections during the Covid -19 Pandemic* LIT CRE**

This book is much more than a record of loss. It is a collection of reflections, prayers, and poems of hundreds of individual souls who collectively tell the story of right now with depth and heart and startling brilliance. On these pages you will find honest testimony of a very difficult time on our planet. Be inspired by these voices and see patterns emerge, feel the pain and longing and hope and faith and frustration and loneliness and transcendence of each contribution. When We Turned Within will help you believe once again that all people share a common humanity, that our souls bind us together, that a better day is possible.

#### **Helen Signy, *Maya’s dance* F SIG**

A powerful novel of survival, resilience, and enduring love, based on an incredible true Holocaust story.

Our dance. Do you remember how I spun and twirled? How I became more than a Jewish girl with battered shoes and dirty clothes ... We did not know then what it would mean, how that dance would change our lives.

Poland, 1942: seventeen-year-old Maya Schulze is struggling to survive in a brutal Nazi labour camp. But despite days filled with hunger, fear and despair, she is able to find courage and beauty in dancing – it is only then that she feels free.

One day a camp guard watches Maya perform, and both their destinies are changed forever. Jan falls in love with Maya and promises to protect her; Maya lives for their stolen moments together when her heart can dance again. Jan ultimately plots Maya's escape and promises to find her when the war is over, but fate cruelly intervenes.

Fifty years on, having received news that changes everything for her, Maya tells her story to journalist Kate Young. As their friendship grows, they piece together the clues to find Jan before it's too late.

### **Tobias Buck, Final Verdict: a Holocaust trial in the twenty-first century      HOL BUC**

On 17 October 2019, in Hamburg's imposing criminal justice building, a trial laden with extraordinary historical weight begins to unfold. Bruno Dey stands accused of being involved in a crime committed over seven decades ago: the murder of at least 5,230 inmates at Stutthof, the Nazi concentration camp in present-day Poland. Only seventeen at the time, Dey was a member of the SS unit responsible for administering the camp. Though he concedes to his role as a guard, he adamantly denies responsibility for the killings.

Dey's trial comes at a poignant moment. As the last members of the war generation - both victims and perpetrators - disappear, so does their first-hand knowledge of the Holocaust's horrors. Beyond its immediate legal implications, the trial stirs profound questions that resonate not only within the realms of German history, politics and collective memory but also within the author's own family. Tobias Buck revisits the silence that surrounds his family's experience during the Nazi period - and his German grandfather's role and responsibility. Through the lens of this riveting courtroom drama, Final Verdict explores the trial's broader significance, both on a political and personal level, and invites us to grapple with the question of whether it is right to prosecute Bruno Dey more than seven decades after he stood guard at Stutthof, and, perhaps more importantly, what we might have done in his place.