

## Heroes: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

A hero is defined as a person who is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities.

Jewish bravery isn't loud and public. You don't need muscles and swords and guns. Here, you won't find the sheriff single-handedly facing down a posse of Evil Guys while all the townsfolk follow each move from behind their windows. Jewish bravery is often quiet, muted.

For example, Esther, the Queen of Persia, could have kept her Jewish identity secret. But when her people were threatened, she risked her life to save her people.

David slayed Goliath, and in myth and reality, that was the act of a hero.

Schindler saved his workers from death by protecting them and then falsifying passports to get them out of the country. There are hundreds of these stories, ordinary people risking their own lives to save Jews from the holocaust.

Those who survived the holocaust are heroes, for small acts of bravery and faith that remained steadfast.

Those soldiers, youngsters really, drafted to fight on foreign soil, far away from family and loved ones, those youngsters grew up fast and saw horrors many of us cannot even imagine. They are heroes, no matter what war. My father was one and I will always be grateful for his service to our country, to all of those who have served, are serving and will do so in the future.

Big acts, small acts, heroes reside around us every day. In the midst of coronavirus, first responders, healthcare workers, truck drivers, so many out there, each and every one is a hero. To the gentleman who put a 50-foot American flag on a 38-ton crane and a homemade "THANK YOU" sign mounted on the back of a pickup truck and drove past hospitals and fire and police stations, you are a hero. To every parent who is forced to work and teach at home, either other children or their own, whew, it is remarkable how much humour you still are able to have. Remarkable times call for bravery that isn't loud or public.

Not a fan of giving any press time to celebrities, but one should mention Bon Jon Jovi who is washing dishes in his restaurant where, for free, he feeds the homeless and now first responders. Sometimes it is easy to give money, but in the end we are judged by our actions. This is an act by a hero.

The neighbors and quilters, all turning their craft projects into mask making, whether for a fee or better yet, free (Jeanne Lee!). Here are heroes.

While feats of strength or breaking records occur in sports, that does not make a hero. Maybe a 5 million dollar contribution warrants the label (thank you Drew Brees). Or JJ Watt raising over 37 million dollars to restore Houston after the hurricane, building over 1100 houses. These are people of noble qualities, donating and then doing. Ok money helps, even I have to admit it.

The future remains a mystery; however, small acts of kindness will always remind us that people are inherently good and kind and they will always extend a hand to neighbors and those we do not know. For our actions need not be of great magnitude, just quiet and muted. They surely need to be heartfelt and generous, with no expectation of something in return. We need to mind our words and deeds to become the best person we can be. In that way, we will be heroes as well.