

Raymon Grossmann – Kaisersaalrede

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We are so diverse it's impossible to have one person speaking for this whole group.

Not only the different places we come from, but also the food we like and the sense of humor that the different people have. Oy, one person could never speak for all of us.

But, nevertheless I'm here. And, I want to thank you for sharing stories and giving us so much information. But that's such a small part of what you did. And it's not only the staff you see before you, but so many volunteers who hooked up with us individually to bring us places and get information that we never knew we would get.

I had no idea that I would be walking into my mother's home when I was here - to the home where she was raised in – or speaking to the school children at the school that she attended.

It was just extraordinary.

Kind of ironic, that this week's Torah portion is *Behar* – “On the mountain.” As most of you know, every week Jewish people at the synagogue read one portion of the Torah, and we read the whole thing in the course of a year.

This week's portion has lots of stuff you don't need to hear about. But the final three chapters of Leviticus, which are part of this portion, talk about – and this was planned I assure you by the leaders – talk about second chances. We are to give others a second chance. Why? Because God gave us a second chance and actually a lot more. And we need to give *ourselves* a second chance, not just the other person.

And it's ironic that even my reaction when I ran to my computer and just did a little check to see what I might say tonight, that at first I thought, yes, all these Jewish people should give the people of Germany a second chance. And that rather they should give us a second chance. And that's what you're doing and that's very nice. But based on this extraordinary experience, there's no question that Jewish people who have no idea at all about what's going on in Germany have to give Germany that second chance, because of the wonderful, wonderful things that you're doing. And my reaction, to one aspect of what was said tonight, is that it's not just that you're treating the Jewish people nicely and saying, “Oh that was terrible”, and I don't mean to make fun of that. It's what Germany is really doing in the immigration situation, with other human needs and the rights of people. Germany has become the example that should lead this world. And that together with the extraordinary treatment that we have received is part of this entire picture

And going back to giving second chances

It's really not about saying, that what was done wasn't ok. It's not about saying, past transgressions are forgiven. It's about going forward, which exactly is what you are doing, to do the reconciliation, to do the next right thing to making the world a better place.

And I've never been in a better place than this for seeing that, that is what is happening.

Thank you, thank you. Thank you all so very much.