

PREFACE

The journey of Austrian artist Gustav Klimt's Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I is described by Anne-Marie O'Connor in *The Lady in Gold: The Extraordinary Tale of Gustav Klimt's Masterpiece, Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*. The painting was confiscated by Nazi operatives in 1938, with some apprehension. Austrians regarded the painting as their Mona Lisa. But the Nazis considered the painting too modernist, the painter was a known friend of the Jews, and the painting's subject, socialite Adele Bloch-Bauer, was Jewish. Its cultural significance could not be erased. So, to resolve the Jewish dilemma, the Nazis tried to erase Adele's identity by changing the name of the painting to "Dame in Gold."

More than five decades later, after a lengthy and epic legal battle fought by Randy Schoenberg, grandson of a Viennese composer who fled the Nazis, the Austrian government returned the painting to its rightful heir, Adele's niece, Maria (Bloch-Bauer) Altmann. In June 2006, philanthropist Ronald Lauder purchased the painting and put it on display in New York City's Neue Galerie. In *The Age of Insight*, Columbia University professor Eric Kandel notes that Lauder had seen the painting on a visit to Vienna during his youth and was smitten by it. To Lauder, it was one of the great depictions of the mystery of womanhood.

In fact, Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I holds many mysteries. One of them is its confluence with the journey of my mother, Lucia Weitzman, daughter of Adele Berl. Lucia's iden-

tity was also erased during the Nazi era. On her journey to reclaim her identity and release the forces of fear and darkness that shaped her life, she encountered in Klimt's painting many of the themes that had populated her dreams, visions, and inspirational writings for over a decade. These themes included the *Shechina*, the feminine essence of the Divine, and the color gold, which represents Divine light.

Years after her encounter with Klimt's painting, Lucia obtained an ancient Judean lamp from an Israeli archeologist that touched on her mystical experience at Jerusalem's Western Wall. She saw no relationship between the lamp and the painting until she revisited the Neue Galerie on Mother's Day in 2013. As Lucia closely examined the painting, she made an extraordinary discovery. The esoteric design Klimt painted on Adele Bloch-Bauer's sleeve was the same design that appeared on her ancient Israeli lamp, and it was similar to a design she'd felt Divinely inspired to trace on the stone blocks of the Western Wall. Furthermore, years ago, long before she'd heard of Klimt or Adele Bloch-Bauer, she dreamed of herself wearing a golden dress. On awakening, she wrote in her journal, "When you find the gold dress and the woman behind the dress, your life will change forever."

If paintings are more than oil and pigment on canvas; if lamps are more than clay; and if dreams are more than illusions, the book you hold in your hand tells the life journey of a Jewish child who lost her identity during the Holocaust, was raised as a Catholic, rediscovered her Jewish family and heritage, and in midlife found herself on an entirely new journey guided by Biblically inspired dreams and visions imbued with both darkness and light, yet wrapped in a cloak of timeless love.

Lucia's journals, and this book, are a part of her journey, milestones in her calling to share her experiences with the world

and to perhaps launch a new era of global peace, love, and closeness with the Divine.

The events described in this book are true. In some instances where historical events are described, the description reflects history as transmitted to Lucia Weitzman or to the author by family members and is accurate to the best of their knowledge. Some names have been changed to protect privacy.

This work is not intended as a definitive treatise on the subjects it deals with, such as Kabbalah, theology, or mysticism. Expressions and interpretations related to these areas are those that came to Lucia Weitzman out of her life and experiences.

As Lucia's son and author of this work, I am part biographer, confidante, and fellow traveler on her spiritual journey. For purposes of clarity and consistency, the book is written in the third person.