

## A Message from Rabbi Howard Buechler

The joy of Pesach has been shattered. Six months to the day that The Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh was violated with a mass shooting, hatred unchecked has struck a synagogue in Poway, California.

Our comfort goes out to the family of Lori Gilbert Kaye, of blessed memory, as she was killed in this horrific act of anti-Semitism , by a lone shooter in an act of terrorism and venomous hatred. Our prayers of healing reach out to those injured including the Rabbi of the synagogue, Yisroel Goldstein. And we are grateful for the heroism of the first responders and the bravery of the community.

Our world is in need of hope and healing as we bear witness to a long litany of faith communities devastated in acts of vile violence. From mass shootings in churches in this country to the mosque violence in New Zealand and church bombings in Sri Lanka and killings of Coptic Christians in Egypt, the spiral of profound prejudice and intense intolerance and violence against faith communities has become a virulent epidemic.

As George Washington clearly articulated in his letter penned in 1790 to the Jewish community of Newport, Rhode Island, “for happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry NO sanction, to persecution NO assistance” . He further quoted the prophetic utterance of Micah regarding worship “every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and figtree, and there shall be none to make him afraid.” Sanctuaries are meant to be places of refuge, security and safety for people of all faiths to pray for shalom and do so in peace without fear !

Pesach and the message of our seders is that the role of government is to unconditionally protect and safeguard all people all the time. Our ancestors were marginalized and on the periphery of society and we became the victims of hatred, violence, oppression. Passover is an experiential template of teaching tolerance and advocating for inclusion and rejects all hatred when a civilization abuses any minority and fails to reject intolerance, bigotry and bias. As Jews our mission is to model and mentor to the world tolerance, harmony, inclusion and the ethics of speech.

Dayenu – enough of the acts of violence.

Dayenu – enough of the political rhetoric (on all sides) that fails to condemn anti-Semitism and that fails to condemn hatred and bigotry in ALL forms.

Dayenu – enough of the moments of silence remembering victims - now is a time of action to silence the hatreds!

Dayenu – enough of political leaders and civic leaders failing to act to safeguard our families – of all faiths  
Dayenu – enough of the toxic hatred spewing unchecked on social media.  
Dayenu – let us resolve to stop the spread of hatred in our society and defuse the abusive language and tweets that denigrate any and every human being - and it starts with each one of us  
Dayenu- let us find ways to speak with one another and find common sense ways to take weapons of mass destruction out of our society that have harmed loved ones at schools, synagogues, churches and mosques.

Passover is about hope not hatred. Passover is about navigating the darkness to safety and to find redemption NOW.

As our DHJC President, Jeff Dubin, shared in a message earlier today, our DHJC Safety & Security committee is striving to insure our daily safety utilizing the best practices advocated by Federal, State and local authorities.

This Wednesday evening is Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Commemoration Day with our memorial services commencing at 7:30 pm and part of our evening will demonstrate our solidarity with the Jewish community of Poway and to advocate for the courage for all Americans to reject the rhetoric of hatred and be vigilant in combatting violence against all faith groups.

With prayers and affirmative deeds that will create shalom & harmony against the virulent strains of hatred and anti-Semitism.

Shalom, Rabbi Howard Buechler