

December 31, 2019/ Tevet 3, 5780

Dear Friends,

Over the past two weeks, we have all been shocked and frightened by the violent attacks on Jews in the New York area. As a community, Tikkun v'Or stands in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, we mourn with those who have lost loved ones and we pray for those who have been injured. May the Healer of the Brokenhearted comfort all those who mourn. May the Healer of the Brokenhearted bind their wounds.

At this moment, we will not give in to fear but will continue to celebrate our Jewish heritage joyfully, openly and with great pride. This is one of the most powerful responses as Jews to antisemitism.

There is a danger that these antisemitic attacks community could make us turn inward, seeking safety in walls, police and guns. While we should and will take appropriate security measures, we know that our tradition teaches that our security lies in standing in solidarity with all who are oppressed. We are deeply committed to the sacred responsibility (mitzvah) to create a just and safe world for our people and for all people. I have been deeply moved by the statements by people and organizations of other faiths who publicly stand with us as Jews. We are not alone.

And while the new reality in America is scary for Jews, unfortunately for centuries our country has been a very scary place for people of color and for indigenous people, for Muslims, for LGBTQ folk, for women, and for the poor. The struggle against antisemitism is tied to the struggle against racism, Islamophobia, misogyny, sexism and all other hatreds. Our Tikkun v'Or community has been blessed with solidarity from the rich diversity of groups in Ithaca. This new year, we must do more to build these connections and to join together to turn our country away from hate and division to justice, love and compassion for all.

Lastly, we are all trying to understand the reasons behind the rise in antisemitic attacks. There is a fierce and very important debate in Jewish community about this issue. During my visit in March, my adult education class will discuss this debate. This will be an opportunity to learn more and to dive deeper into this critical discussion. I invite you to sign up for this discussion. In the next few weeks, I will suggest some material to read that may be helpful.

May all be blessed with a year of safety, joy and love.

May 2020 be a year of turning, from hate to love, from violence to compassion, from injustice to justice for all.

May the Healer of all of us - brokenhearted - be with us in the coming year. Happy New Year!

And much love, Rabbi Brian