

**10-29-18**

## **Resilience**

This journal entry is more personal than some of my past entries.

The shooting at Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh has shocked and saddened all of us. My email box is full of statements and messages from Jewish organizations, all expressing shock and sadness, decrying the inhumane act, and urging unity and love in the face of division and hate.

I am writing on Monday morning after the events of Shabbat morning. This morning I watched an [interview](#) on the Today Show with the rabbi of Tree of Life congregation, Rabbi Jeffrey Myers, and another [interview](#) with two sisters of one of the murdered congregants, Dr. Richard Gottfried. I sobbed. The sadness is so deep.

So many aspects of this horrible incident are weighing on my thoughts and emotions. We all know there is hate and evil in the world, and we are fortunate that our small corner of the world is full of love, community, family, and so many other positive values. When we see a hateful, evil act on people just like us – a Conservative synagogue in a diverse yet Jewish neighborhood – it hits home, hard.

I am comforted that so much good is emerging despite the horrific violence and loss of life. Chief among the good are the first responders, the brave Pittsburgh police officers, who ran toward the gunfire, escorted the rabbi and others out of the synagogue, and prevented additional deaths. I can't say enough about their goodness and bravery. These are heroes.

As the briefers in the press conference said on Sunday morning, each of us needs to personally go find a first responder here in our local community and thank them for what they do. I tried thanking our off-duty Montgomery County officers who patrolled Kol Shalom on Sunday morning. I say 'tried' because I don't think they could understand my garbled speech through my tears.

I am also comforted seeing the support from the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. So many groups, communities, and individuals are speaking out against hate and division, speaking out against regarding people as the "Other," and acting in love as a counter to hate. We should be encouraged by this support, and we need to rededicate ourselves to acts of loving kindness and merciful justice.

This was the worst act of murder against Jews in US history. Hateful, murderous acts against Jews instantly brings up images of the Holocaust, and of the atmosphere in Nazi Germany in the years leading up to World War II and the Holocaust. In Germany there may have been earnest people who protested hateful treatment of Jews and others, yet 'society' and the government managed to silence or neutralize them. I can't help but wonder how American society and American government will behave in the days, weeks, months and years ahead.

For my part, I am resolving to be strong, and to rededicate myself to be a light in the darkness. We will of course continue to focus on our own security posture for Kol Shalom and to take appropriate steps. Most importantly, I will continue working with our congregational leadership and all congregants to connect and live our traditions of Torah (study), Avodah (worship), and G'milut hasadim (acts of loving kindness). This is how we bring light into darkness, and to fight hate with love, kindness, and justice.