

# **Reflections from Rabbi Dr. Analia Bortz on Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue shooting, October 27, 2018**

Shabbat just left us and the Neshamah Yeterah, the extra soul our tradition teaches us we receive every Shabbat has left us as well.

Today I cry. It's not just about that extra soul, it's about the neshamot nosaffot, the additional souls that are leaving this world, victims of violence and the permissibility of bigotry.

Today I cry, like the baby going through the covenant of Abraham, on the same week when we read in the Torah about this mitzvah of Abraham circumcising his child, I cry as if we're all bounded on the altar to be sacrificed and there is no angel that comes to stop the massacre.

Today I cry, for our brothers and sisters of my own faith turning tears of joy into eternal wounds that would not be healed anytime soon or ever, and for our memories of a peaceful Shabbat turned into a bloody field.

Today I cry, for this nation I love, a country I chose.

Today I cry and mourn as I did for September 11, Sandy Hook, Aurora, Boston Marathon, Virginia Tech, Orlando, Parkland, Sutherland Springs, San Bernardino, Charleston and so-so-so many-many-more times.

Today I cry for the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Today I cry, because schools, houses of worship, workplaces, homes, playgrounds, and supermarkets should be our safe havens.

Today I cry when I see that we humans have become our worst enemies when hatred and bigotry take over our humanity and destroys it.

Today I cry, my heart aches; I'm overwhelmed with sorrow.

May the victims be remembered for blessings.

May the family and friends of the victims find solace among a larger community that supports them and prays for the souls we'll remember.

May our society find healing and a wakeup call acting against violence and bigotry.

May those who feel empowered by the permissibility of violence be brought to justice.

Today I cry longing for the words of the song:

***America! America!  
God shed His grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!***