

Torah On One Foot

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A Candle of Hope

There is a midrash or commentary about a candle that remained lit from week to week. According to legend, this candle burned throughout our matriarch Sarah's lifetime. When she died, the candle was extinguished. Upon learning that his mother died, Isaac was inconsolable. Deeply saddened, he returned to his mother's tent with his wife Rebecca. When she entered the room, the candle lit again. This comforted Isaac.

Whenever tragedy strikes, our community and our nation mourn as one. We realize that a light has gone out. This light can many forms. The light of loved ones who were tragically killed in Pittsburgh for being Jewish. The light of feeling safe in public spaces, schools, and houses of worship. The light of innocence when we tell our children and grandchildren that hate and, in particular, antisemitism still exists in the world. These are real losses which cannot be taken lightly. It will take time to emerge from the shock of these complex emotions.

Meanwhile, we must begin the conversation of how the light will be rekindled. The imagery of Abraham and Sarah's open tent offers a way forward. Reaching out to the three guests provided a sense of purpose and meaning for the first Jewish family. Gathering together provides us a sense of peace. An opportunity to share our feelings with others and hope.

May our community continue to be a *sukkat sh'lomecha* – a place of shelter and a sanctuary of well-being. There are no easy answers when hatred and violence

strike. But our gesture of creating space where we can share our stories surely lights the candle of hope, friendship, and resilience.