

**February 16th, 2018/1 Adar, 5778**

Dear chevreh,

In the words of Rabbi Joe Black of Temple Emmanuel in Denver, CO who gave the Opening Prayer for the Colorado State House in the Aftermath of a Tragedy on February 15, 2018.

*Our God and God of all people,*

*God of the Rich and God of the poor.*

*God of the teacher and God of the student.*

*God of the families who wait in horror.*

*God of the dispatcher who hears screams of terror from under bloodied desks.*

*God of the first responder who bravely creeps through ravaged hallways.*

*God of the doctor who treats the wounded.*

*God of the rabbi, pastor, imam or priest who seeks words of comfort but comes up empty.*

*God of the young boy who sees his classmates die in front of him.*

*God of the weeping, raging, inconsolable mother who screams at the sight of her child's lifeless body .*

*God of the shattered communities torn apart by senseless violence.*

*God of the legislators paralyzed by fear, partisanship, money and undue influence.*

*God of the Right.*

*God of the Left.*

*God who hears our prayers.*

*God who does not answer.*

*On this tragic day when we confront the aftermath of the 18th School shooting in our nation on the 46th day of this year, I do not feel like praying.*

*Our prayers have not stopped the bullets.*

*Our prayers have changed nothing.*

*Once again, a disturbed man with easy access to guns has squinted through the sights of a weapon, aimed, squeezed a trigger and taken out his depraved anger, pain and frustration on innocents: pure*

*souls. Students and teachers. Brothers and sisters. Mothers and fathers- cut down in an instant by the power of hatred and technology.*

*We are guilty, O God.*

*We are guilty of inaction.*

*We are guilty of complacency.*

*We are guilty of allowing ourselves to be paralyzed by politics.*

*The blood of our children cries out from the ground.*

*The blood of police officers cut down in the line of duty flows through our streets.*

*I do not appeal to You on this terrible morning to change us. We can only do that ourselves.*

*Our enemies do not come only from far away places.*

*The monsters we fear live among us.*

*May those in this room who have the power to make change find the courage to seek a pathway to sanity and hope.*

*May we hold ourselves and our leaders accountable.*

*Only then will our prayers be worthy of an answer.*

AMEN

After Columbine, this entire generation of students knows at a visceral level that they may be the next school to experience violence. How do they know this? It happens all the time. They prepare for it. Who is next?

First, we will grieve.

We must take in how catastrophic is our national problem with gun violence, and feel its calamitous effects on our psyche.

Then, we must act, so that there won't be a next.

\*\*\*A resource for parents talking to children about trauma and loss:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yxy-giJ059ik7rTHIm5-0Ym5WxRPbVh5pxPgX3\\_b62Y/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yxy-giJ059ik7rTHIm5-0Ym5WxRPbVh5pxPgX3_b62Y/edit)

Shabbat Shalom and Chodesh Tov,

Rabbi Diana