

We are a holy community. We are led by our Jewish tradition, history, and covenant with God to create a holier world; we have a covenantal responsibility to create peace and unity, which requires us, at times, to rebuke transgression. We are thankful to live in a country that furthers that mission with institutions that protect and uplift its citizens. We vigorously support and defend the rights of citizens to peacefully protest.

The actions by the protesters in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday does not reflect the ideals up to which we strive. Therefore, we pray that those who chose violence over peace may turn their hearts toward more righteous service rather than political goals. Righteousness is eternal; the other temporary. We pray for calm, we pray for justice, and we ask all of our community, our friends, and neighbors in Broward to do the same.

As we leave behind a week that saw the foundations of our democracy shaken to the core, I want to share a Shabbat message of comfort and hope. In Hasidic circles, a passage of the mystical text Zohar, is read before the Friday evening service. The text imagines a shattered world made whole again. “The secret of Shabbat is that it creates a unity on which the mystery of oneness settles. As Shabbat enters, she becomes separated from all forces of evil and harsh judgement and is left united with holy radiance […] The realm of anger flees from her […] her face shines with the light from on high and she is clothed with the holy people below, all of whom are adorned with fresh souls…”

This Shabbat, may we leave behind the dark destructive forces that have intruded into our American lives and look to a new beginning, bathed in a fresh light, free of hatred and vitriol, in which our tired and wounded souls find healing in seeking one another in love.

May those who brought about this moment of chaos consider their choices and actions in their attempts to further their political goals. We encourage them to engage in *teshuvah*, earnest self-evaluation and change, recognizing the death and damage wrought through these heinous acts of violence. We encourage all to hear the words of a God of love, who calls for peace, unity, and for justice. May we push back against chaos with a voice of love.

In that loving spirit during these times of anxiety and confusion, we must remember to attend to and prioritize the emotional well-being of ourselves, our family, and our community. If you have any reactions or feelings you would like to discuss, please know that I am here to support you.

Wishing you a restful and healing Shabbat,

Rabbi David Spey