



**A message from the Rabbis
in response to the Las Vegas Shooting
October 2, 2017**

The revered Rabbi Gershon ben Judah once wrote, "My throat is parched from crying, Violence." We are all so tired of the violence that destroys us. Children are killed in schools, concert goers are gunned down as if the assassin is playing a video game, and we are tired of crying. We are tired of praying. We are tired of calling for unity and to stand with the victims.

As we see it, now is the time not for prayer or crying, but for action. We need to call our legislators, write our leaders and demand an end to this carnage. Nothing will change, so long as we keep calling for solidarity. What we need is bold and courageous leadership.

As Jews approaching the New Year we look forward to year of peace, but the future is looking far too bleak. We look for justice and behold violence.

Consider this prayer by Rabbi Naomi Levy. Pray we must, she writes, but so must we be called to work to turn our helplessness into action.

Our hearts are breaking, God,
As our nation buries our fellow citizens who went out only to hear music.
The loss is overwhelming.
Send comfort and strength, God, to grieving relatives,
To siblings, family and friends in this time of shock and mourning.
Shield them from despair.
Send healing to those who witnessed the horror.
Ease their pain, God,
Let their fears give way to hope.
Let their cries give way once more to laughter.

Bless us, God,
Work through us.
Turn our helplessness into action.
Teach us to believe that we can rise up from this tragedy
With a renewed faith in the goodness of our society.
Shield us from indifference
And from our tendency to forget.
Open our hearts, open our hands.
Innocent blood is calling out to us to act.
Remind us that we must commit ourselves to prevent further bloodshed
With all our hearts and souls.
Teach us perseverance and dedication.
Let us rise up as one in a time of soul-searching and repair
So that all citizens may go to a concert in peace, God,
Let them be safe.

God of the brokenhearted,
God of the living, God of the dead,
Gather the souls of the victims
Into Your eternal shelter.
Let them find peace in Your presence, God.
Their lives have ended
But their lights can never be extinguished.
May they shine on us always
And illuminate our way.
Amen.