



**A Message from the Rabbis
in response to the Shooting in San Antonio Texas
November 6, 2017**

When the Israelites stood at the Red Sea, fearful as the Egyptian army closed in behind them, our tradition teaches that Moses began to pray at great length. Upon hearing his prayers, God said to him, "My beloved are on the verge of drowning in the sea, and you spin out lengthy prayers before Me." Moses spoke up to God, "But Master of the Universe, what else can I do?" God replied, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say to them: Go forward."

As Moses, our greatest leader, demonstrates, it is often difficult to know how to act in the face of danger. Moses had the instinct to pray as many of us tend to do. Our tradition is clear, though, that there is a time to pray and there is a time to act.

26 people are dead and more than 20 others are wounded in San Antonio. This comes on the heels of the deadliest mass shooting in the history of our country. Our people are on the verge of drowning. And we stand before God spinning lengthy prayers.

We must go forward.

There are many different opinions as to what is the root cause of these horrific acts. Tossing politics aside, there is probably value in each of them. Whether we believe that this is an issue of gun control, mental health, or inability to enforce current laws, the bottom line remains the same. After Sandy Hook, after Orlando, after Las Vegas, nothing has changed.

We must go forward. It is time to demand that our leaders stand up and take action.

For those leaders who insist that we need stricter gun laws in our country: go forward. Galvanize your people and lead them to the direction of action.

For the leaders who insist that this is an issue of mental health: go forward. It is not enough to simply take down your political opponents. Introduce legislation; create support systems that will get individuals the help they need to be healthy.

For those leaders who believe the laws we have are sufficient: go forward. Prove it. Create task forces to analyze our laws, regulations, and enforcements. If there are holes, plug them. If there are weaknesses, identify and strengthen them.

It is not time to pray. It is time to ask ourselves what we can do to make the situation better. We must be willing to stand across from someone who disagrees with us and differentiate between the curse of divisiveness and the blessing of a diversity of opinions. Every one of us needs to turn to the people we consider to be our leaders, and demand that they lead us forward into action.

We must go forward.

