

## **A Letter From Rabbi Cooper: Condemnation of the Terrorist Act in Sri Lanka**

Mustafa,

I write to you from Israel, where I am spending our Passover Holiday with my children and grandchildren. It is geography, therefore, that prevents me from standing with you physically to demonstrate solidarity and from raising my voice together with yours and all of our colleagues in condemning the attacks in Sri Lanka and in pledging support to those in need in a country which is still reeling from the pain of the murderous, Easter attacks there.

Despite the claims of extremists that these attacks are motivated by a desire to carry out God's will, these attacks are neither commanded by God nor explained through any theological perversion of what we know about God. We know that one who claims to hear God commanding cruelty, violence or murder is not hearing God's voice.

I believe that any legitimate religion mandates us to care for one another, to defend each other against hatred and to cherish all people who, we believe, have been created in the Divine Image. The attacks represent the result of actions motivated not by religion but by unbridled cruelty and insatiable hatred.

In the face of such a horrific spree of attacks and explosions, we turn to God together for the strength to move forward and work for good in a world in which evil such abides. We turn to God for the courage to stand together for human dignity, for respect of one another and for the unity of all humanity.

I hope that through future meetings and gatherings we can work together to heal, to help and to hope. In the meantime, please accept my heartfelt words, on behalf of my entire congregation, at this most difficult time.

May we all be blessed with peace.

Shalom,

Neil S Cooper, Rabbi  
Temple Beth Hillel - Beth El  
Wynnewood, PA