



Torah for Turbulent Times

"A Prayer for Today"

"It's times like these you learn to live again. It's times like these you give and give again. It's times like these you learn to love again. It's times like these time and time again." (Foo Fighters) These words will be sung this evening as part of the transition into our country's next stage of leadership. Traditionally, this new moment in our times signifies one of our democracy's greatest principles - the peaceful transition of power. No matter your religious beliefs or political affiliation, I invite us to show *unity as a community* by reciting the universal prayer below for our leaders. It can be read silently, during a break from work, at home over dinner or even multiple times throughout the day, week and year.

One of the important Jewish customs that has developed over time is to offer a prayer for whatever country our people happen to be in. It's practical and it's an acknowledgement that we are interconnected. As it has been said, what happens to one of us, happens to all of us. Beyond this, we as a people have multiple layers of responsibility for our planet, families, community, and ourselves. We learn from the Talmud, *Kol yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*, all of Israel are responsible for each other. (Shevuot 39a) It has also been said, it's not easy being Jewish. And, I would add, especially these days, it's not easy being a human being.

Please join me today in taking an oath of sorts - to pledge to be the best people we can be, to be open to listening and learning from others especially when we disagree, to do more acts of generosity and kindness, to seek justice and peace, to love, to take care of ourselves, and to "give and give again."

A Prayer for Our Leaders

The fulfilment of our dreams depends in large measure on the wisdom and courage of our leaders. We pray that our leaders have the wisdom to seek and find solutions to the challenges that we face and the courage to implement them. We pray that they use their powers wisely and well. We pray that our leaders practice compassion, remembering that all human beings are created in the image of G-d, that each human life is valuable and sacred. We pray that our leaders practice justice, striving for the good of all, all the people of our society, all the people of G-d's earth. We pray that our leaders recognize the unique opportunity they have been given to make a difference in the world, and that they rise above their backgrounds and their limitations and use that opportunity with wisdom and courage. We pray that our leaders reflect in their policies and decisions the

noble ideals that we all share. We pray that You stand beside them and guide them through the night with a light from above. May Your blessings be with them.
(*Siddur Eit Ratzon*, Joseph Rosenstein)
V'nomar amen. And, we say together, amen.

-Rabbi Mark