

Letter to VN

How ironic. During Shabbat services in the Upper Valley on Saturday January 15 2022, we were discussing the physical dangers and psychological trauma of the Israelites upon leaving Egypt and being trapped by Pharaoh's army behind them and the Red Sea in front of them. At the same time, unbeknownst to us, Jews also praying in their synagogue in Colleyville, Texas were experiencing similar terror by being trapped by a gunman threatening them with harm. It is unacceptable that anyone should experience fear or be targeted because of their faith.

We wish to express our gratitude for the words of support and strength offered to Congregation Beth Israel, and by extension, to those of us here in the Upper Valley and elsewhere. We also want to express our gratitude to the many law enforcement professionals and agencies who combined their skills to free the hostages in Colleyville, and by extension, free those of us here in the Upper Valley and elsewhere from the immediate fear and despair of this event.

We are living in dangerous times, yet these times are not devoid of hope. These times require us to strengthen our sense of Jewish community not just here in the Upper Valley but globally. Such solidarity gives rise to hope. The times also require that we strengthen our sense of solidarity with people of all faiths and good will. The outpouring of support and good will from many people of many faiths also gives rise to hope. Hope, however, is not enough.

The Bible tells us that God created the world in 6 days and on the seventh day God rested. Jewish tradition teaches us that the work of Creation was deliberately left unfinished so humans and God would work together to complete the act of Creation. This concept is called *tikkun olam*, or, repairing the world, and imbues a sense of holiness to everyone's efforts in life. It is through direct action of standing by the injured, soundly condemning acts of hatred and social diminishment, and advocating for policies that can prevent such outrages like Colleyville from occurring, that we will realize the goal of repairing the world.

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