



In Solidarity with the Muslim Community

March 15, 2019

Rabbi Sharon Brous

So far we know of 49 people who died in the mosques in Christchurch, and nearly 50 who were seriously injured. But they are not the only victims of this attack. There were hundreds of Muslims praying inside those holy spaces when the gunmen entered, hundreds of people who will now bear psychological scars for the rest of their lives. There are the thousands who are directly touched by this terror attack: family members of victims and survivors, friends, loved ones. And there are millions of Muslims around the world who will get up to go to Friday prayers today with grieving hearts, with fear for themselves and their children and with a deeper awareness of their own vulnerability.

I know this because in November, after the shooting at Tree of Life, the whole Jewish community felt the reverberations immediately and fiercely, across the country and across the world. We trembled, wept and worried. Our family had been attacked.

My heart hurts for my Muslim brothers and sisters. You have been targeted with a crude and shameless bigotry, especially in this country, especially over the past several years. Your faith has been desecrated for political gain, your bodies and holy sites threatened by an unapologetic hatred. I am a Jew and a rabbi. I reach out to you with love and in solidarity.

And my heart hurts for all those, in the US and around the world, who have been demeaned, threatened and ultimately subjected to violence for their faith, heritage or ethnicity. Among the great shames of our age is that we have come to assume that gun violence can strike us or our loved ones anywhere—in the office, on the street, in a movie theater, in school. Even still, there is a special kind of horror knowing that sacred spaces, too, can be the sites of such carnage. No person should ever feel unsafe walking into mosque, church, synagogue, temple.

I lift up the survivors of Tree of Life, Sutherland Springs, Mother Emmanuel and Oak Creek, knowing that this attack, a world away, is an attack on all people of faith, and will likely thrust many survivors back into their own trauma.

I lift up all the survivors and loved ones of victims of gun violence, who will awaken to the news that another horrific act of violence has struck, tearing apart bodies, families and communities.

I lift up all who suffer at the hands of white supremacy, a hateful, radical ideology that has wreaked havoc and devastation across generations and oceans. No amount of human suffering will satisfy those whose hearts incline toward racialized hatred. This extremism threatens each of us and all of us.

I ask God to give us all strength. And I ask us to see: raw hatred combined with the proliferation of deadly weapons will continue to unleash unthinkable human misery. God can weep with us, but only we—through acts of love and courage—can stop this madness.

[#ChristchurchShooting](#)

Taking Action:

We are anguished and outraged by the mass shootings in two mosques in New Zealand, an attack on our Muslim brothers and sisters and an affront to all people of faith.

A few actions you can take now:

1. Please read and Share Rabbi Sharon Brous' [Facebook Post](#):

"...I ask God to give us all strength. And I ask us to see: raw hatred combined with the proliferation of deadly weapons will continue to unleash unthinkable human misery. God can weep with us, but only we—through acts of love and courage—can stop this madness." - Rabbi Sharon Brous

2. Please add your name to the Groundswell campaign collecting prayers from around the world, which will be delivered to the communities in NZ: [HERE](#).

3. And, if you are able, please support the fundraising campaign launched by the local Islamic community in NZ (with some guidance and support by American Muslim partners): [HERE](#).

May this hatred be eradicated from the earth,

Rabbis Brous, Melissa Balaban, Brooke Wirschafter