

A Prayer for the Slain and Injured in the Attack on the Gay Community Center in Tel Aviv

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מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב ואמותנו שרה רבקה רחל ולאה, הוא יברך וירפא את החולים והחולות שנפגעו בפיגוע החבלני והרצחני בתל אביב, בארצנו הקדושה, בעבור שאנחנו מתפללים בעבורם. בשכר זה, הקב"ה ימלא רחמים עליהם, להחלים ולרפאותם, ולהחזיקם ולהחיותם, וישלח להם מהרה רפואה שלמה מן השמים, בתוך שאר חולי ישראל, רפואת הנפש ורפואת הגוף, שבת היא מלזעוק ורפואה קרובה לבא. השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב ונאמר אמן.

Master of the Universe, watch over the souls of the slain and bring healing to those who were injured in the violent and murderous attack in Tel Aviv in our Holy Land. See how not only the bodies, but the souls and lives of these persons have been shattered. See how this support group for teenagers - this place which for many of them was their one refuge of protection, support, and acceptance - how this haven has now been violated and has now become a place of danger, of vulnerability, and of death. Heal their bodies, heal their souls and heal their spirits.

O Lord, you have taught us in Your Torah the mitzvah of the עגלה ערופה. You have taught us that when a person is murdered and it is not known who the murder is, or what the motives are behind the murder, that it is the leaders of the community who must look inward and ask what sins of commission or omission could have possibly contributed to this tragedy. Who among us in the Jewish people, whatever our denomination or affiliation, can say ידינו לא שפכו את הדם הזה, that we have done everything in our ability to protect against such a tragedy? Who among us, throughout the Jewish people, can say, לא ראינוהו ופטרנוהו בלא מזונות ובלא לוייה, that we did everything in our power to ensure that these victims were cared for physically and emotionally, to ensure that we gave them friendship and protection? O Lord, we cannot make this declaration of innocence.

Master of the Universe, give us the courage to stand up to and reject all forms of hateful speech and violence. Give us the strength of spirit to refuse to tolerate the rejection of any human being, each of whom is created in בצלם א-לוייהם, in Your Divine image. Help us to internalize in our hearts and to manifest in our actions the mandate of the verse in this week's *parsha* ואהבתם את הגר, that it is our responsibility to care for, to love, and to protect all members of our society, and in particular those who are most vulnerable and most likely to feel estranged and rejected. Help us to value every member of our society for whom he or she is, to care for them, to support them, and to recognize that they are an equal part of our community כגור כאזרח יהיה. Give us the strength to fully actualize – in our speech and in our actions – the maxim that כל בזה בזה, that the entirety of the Jewish people, straight and gay, is interwoven with and responsible for every one of its members.

We cannot change the past, but we can work to change the future, so we pray, O Lord, that You accept our mourning and our prayers, and give us the strength to change. We pray that we can make the necessary sacrifices to live up to our obligations to You and to every human being who is created in Your image, and that this can bring partial atonement for the דם נקי בקרב עמך ישראל, for the innocent blood that has been shed and allowed to have been shed in the midst of Your people, of Israel.

Atone for Your people, O Lord, bring us healing, a healing of persons, a healing of society, help us create a society where all are protected, cared for, and valued, and let no innocent blood ever again be spilled. Now and speedily in our days, and let us say, Amen.