

A Spiritual Care Reflection on Pittsburgh

Vayehi erev, vayehi voker: yom chamishi,

There was evening, there was morning, the fifth day.

The Story of Creation from *B'reshet*/Genesis

It is day 5, Thursday. Tomorrow is Shabbat -- the first Shabbat after Pittsburgh. We will arrive at another Torah portion, this one is called *Chaye Sarah*; Sarah's Life. Across this great land and in every land, a child will stand at our Torah, chant our ancient language of community, and continue to tell us our own story. Across millennia, sitting on hewed stones and plush pews, our people have gathered each Shabbat to watch a child take their place in our tradition. We will rise to recite Kaddish. To the names on our respective lists we will add Rose Mallinger, Melvin Wax, Sylvan Simon, Bernice Simon, Joyce Feinberg, Daniel Stein, Irving Younger, Jerry Rabinowitz, Richard Gottfried, Cecil Rosenthal and David Rosenthal, may their memories be a blessing.

In these past days, one day to the next, Jews across the world attended the funeral of a loved one, danced at a wedding, attended a bris, ended shiva, began sheloshim, invited loved ones over for Shabbat dinner. And we have opened e-mails, read texts, watched TV, and talked to one another. We have many feelings, thoughts, and spiritual rumblings in response to Pittsburgh. We are open and because we are open, we are filled up. We are contemplating our place in the world. Time does not heal all wounds, but time does continue. Some of us have a relational connection to Squirrel Hill, some of us feel a deep empathy that resonates across our Jewish communal arc. Every Jew is connected to every Jew. Some of us are stimulated in our guts as if we can genetically sense the expulsion of our distant relatives. All of us are linked to The Tree of Life. Some of us are called to political action, some of us are reflecting in the private spaces of our friendships, some of us are enraged, bewildered, confused, overwhelmed. Some are clear.

Out of the very core of our tradition, we are bequeathed Shabbat, a day of rest. Rest is complex. Rest is the landscape of re-newed action, rest is the recipe of re-dedicated nourishment, rest is the insight of a strong heart after a strenuous journey. In every place, though shiva is suspended, grief is not, yet that the community gathers as one to embrace one another.

This Shabbat, however you celebrate Shabbat: a hike, a drive to someplace special, sitting in temple, going out to brunch, sleeping late--let it be a Shabbat that we all declare with intention. Enjoy Shabbat with deliberate rest however you engage it. If your Shabbat is in a restaurant order a bottle of wine, lift your glasses high and toast L'chaim, wear your kippah everywhere you go, cloak your tallit with kavannah and walk home from shul at a sacred deliberate pace, call someone and wish them Shabbat shalom, gather, gather, gather in rest, in the fullness of your being, your thoughts, your insights, your love, to then emerge into the first day of creation nourished by rest, to say yes to the new day.

Let us declare--out of the very core of our theological and spiritual expression--our presence in the world: in our neighborhoods, on our streets, on our buses. Let the world know our love, our very existence. Rest at home, rest in the streets, rest in the cafes, rest in our museums, rest in our concert halls. Death may re-define time, grief may re-align vision. But, how we see, how we

take our time, is our tradition's spiritual nourishment to live life as best we can in any moment.

Let us declare our rest, our Shabbat, with intention, and let our rest give pause, give succor, give life. Let us use our rest to grant us insight, strength, and kavannah to face the next day.

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