

A Prayer for our Country

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I've had the honor of sharing a prayer for our country multiple times on this holy day. This time feels different.

Last year, on October 7th, we watched the story of the Jewish people emerge on America's national stage like never before. Suddenly, Israel was top of mind for millions of Americans — no matter their faith, ethnicity, or politics. Some have stood with Israel, others against. For many of us, antisemitism has appeared fully formed on the doorsteps of our lives: at home, at school, at work, at play. Hostility of all sorts has threatened America's promise as a safe haven. And so, it's against this backdrop, that I offer a prayer for our country:

May our nation be one of boundless compassion. May we open our hearts to each other regardless of the way we worship, the partners we love, or the color of our skin. May we embrace our shared humanity.

Let us heed the teachings of Torah to protect our democracy. From voting rights to reproductive rights, let us become the bravest advocates for human rights. May our leaders, both elected and lay, bring to bear viable solutions to gun violence, racial injustice, and religious discrimination.

May we unite to ensure that no one in this country goes to bed hungry, that everyone has a safe place to live, that each of us can afford to see a doctor. May America be that land of equal opportunity.

In this polarized moment, let us consider perspectives on all sides with more patience, less rage. Let us search harder for common ground — and common good — across our country's splintered terrain.

May we bring more urgency to the earth's changing climate. Let us heal each neighborhood ravaged by floods and fires, heat and hurricanes. May each of us take deliberate steps to preserve our planet.

As we look ahead, let us keep America's beauty in clear sight: our educators and innovators, our emergency responders and social workers, our caregivers and community organizers, our troops here and abroad ... all those who make *tikkun olam* their calling. Let us save these life-affirming images in our mind's eye to guide the path forward.

In this new year, let us renew our faith in the possibility of America. Let us pray that next year on Yom Kippur we can celebrate the progress we've made in bringing a more perfect union closer to home.

Shanah Tovah.

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