**A letter to my country, from an American Jew living in Canada**
**Rabbi Dan Moskovitz**
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Dear America,

I am grieving your loss, not of an election, but of your promise. In the five stages of grief I am vacillating between Anger and Depression. Denial was a brief period when I woke up Wednesday morning and thought the nightmare had just been a bad dream. Bargaining was also a blip, what do you trade when you feel like you lost your country?

I guess I need to start there. As an American Rabbi serving a congregation in Canada I am well aware that while this election affects all of us, it's different for you as Canadians. I consider myself so fortunate to be in this country, but it's not mine yet.

My friends are all asking to move here and sleep on my sofa. My parents actually wrote me with 1930s Germany tropes of, "you may have saved your family by going to Canada when you did". I like to think they are being overly dramatic, but at the same time – I feel lucky to be in this country right now.

That is maybe the part that is at the core the anger and depression. I feel like I lost my country Tuesday night. Not that my candidate lost, or my party – I have voted for winners and losers all my life – but as has been said so much better by so many this was a referendum on decency and compassion; the values I thought were at the core of the character of the United States. They were trumped by hatred Tuesday night.

Not everyone who voted for Trump was racist, bigoted, misogynistic or xenophobic. Some simply could not vote for her, so they just stayed home or left that selection blank. But others, still knowing full well his (not theirs, but his) deplorable behavior looked past it because they had been neglected in the far too timid economic recovery, their medical bills were too high, they had lost jobs and homes and confidence in their government to protect them so they overlooked all that he said and did and voted for a populist who promised to make them great again. They cared about the ends and overlooked the means by which he obtained them.

And this is the part that has truly put me in despair. I pray that it was just campaign rhetoric and that he won't be able to do the many horrible things that so many cheered him on to do. But still, he was rewarded for saying them. He won and decency lost.

I am struggling with how to explain this to my children? "They go low, we go high." I can teach that to my kids, I can aspire to that in myself. But meanness, misogyny, racism, bigotry, verbal and physical pugilism, that's how you get to be President of the United States and leader of the free world? I cannot square that. Not with my faith in humanity, not with my faith in Judaism.

Throughout the Torah God tests the Jewish people. He puts them in the most vexing of situations. Temples are destroyed, false prophets rise amongst them, they are attacked from within and they are attacked from without. In each instance the people rise above the challenges and are stronger because of them, usually stronger together.

I don't think God brought us Donald Trump – but I do think this is a test of our character and our humanity with great implications.

The biblical prophets were always ignored and often derided and yet they stood up, and spoke truth to power. In the end, sometimes decades later they were always proven right. The cancerous cells they saw in society metastasized just as they said they would, the people suffered greatly but they recovered and eventually healed and were restored.

*R'faeynu Adonai – Dear God please heal us.*

The last stage of grieving is acceptance – when I move to that stage it will not be to accept that this is how America or the world works now, that hatred and hate are to be rewarded. Rather I will accept this as a test. Perhaps the greatest test of my generation, one that began on 9/11. A test of our humanity, a test to prove that love does trump hate, that we can be good AND prosperous. That Americans can be great without tearing each other down in the process.

I am lucky to be in Canada right now, but there is work to be done here too, work to be done in America and around the globe, we are not impervious to the same isolationist forces and economic circumstances that brought Trump to power.

Election night made clear what we already knew; we are not there yet, maybe we have slipped backward.

Rabbi Tarfon used to say: It is not upon you to complete the task, but you are not free to idle from it (Avot 2:21). The time for mourning is ending, we must raise from our grief and get back to work – for there is much work to be done.