When I want to rail at God

prayer is the last place I want to be.

I know I'll find my way back to God one way or another

but right now I don't have words of my own

and the words of tradition feel empty

given that men died with those words on their lips this week.

But the Voice of Jewish tradition says I don't have a choice;

it says there are *shiva minyans* to go to and Shabbat services to attend.

The Voice of Tradition says that prayer isn't just about what I have to say or not say;

that prayer isn't just about me.

The Voice of Tradition says that life goes on;

that the community needs to gather;

that prayer is going to take place with or without me.

And I remember that even empty words can be a refuge;

that the rituals can shelter me through familiarity alone.

If I don't believe in prayer this week, that's okay,

but somebody else might need to pray

and they need the community around them to do it.

And if I'm a part of the community then I'd better be there.

The Voice of Jewish tradition doesn't promise that prayer works;

it doesn't promise that Jews won't be slaughtered -

not even if they're righteous,

not even if they're praying.

The Voice of Jewish tradition doesn't promise that prayer works;

What it says is:

Pray anyway. (TOGETHER)