AFTER POWAY
RABBI DAN MOSKOVITZ
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Like many of you, I have been receiving a steady stream of emails from clergy and faith leaders across the city, expressing support and solidarity with the Jewish community. These come on the heels of my own letters and emails to the same faith leaders in the Muslim and Christian community after the horror of Christchurch and Sri Lanka. It would be comical if it wasn't so serious, like that old joke about two Canadians standing at an open door, "after you, no after you, no after you". We just keep trading messages of condolence and on a macro level it seems nothing changes, we can comfort and console, but we cannot prevent.

And yet blessedly, amazingly, oddly…after the calls and consolations, after the broken glass is swept up and the bullet holes patched over, or even before, we do what our people have always done dust ourselves off, count our blessings and carry on, L'chaim, life goes on.

100 parents came with their children to religious school at Temple Sholom this Sunday, they saw the increased security guards, the heightened awareness and hopefully they felt more safe than rattled.

Shuls in San Diego met for daily minyan, knowing that down the block they were still investigating the shooting at the Chabad of Poway.

You are here tonight, at JCC, you walked into a very public Jewish building to attend a board meeting of our community. Each in its own way is an act of resistance, a statement of Never Again, and I use that phase with all of its loaded meaning intentionally.

Is that a good thing? A wonderful coping mechanism? A troubling thing, should linger more on the tragedy? (Even though, of course, even since the tragedy many other

human tragedies have transpired that eclipse the magnitude of this one: just one example is that in Seattle, a crane fell downtown, killing four people. Though it was not a Jewish event, and it was not terrorism, should not the names and souls of Sarah Wong and Travis Corbet, two of the victims, be on our mind on some level, even as we mourn Lori Gilbert-Kaye, who was killed at the Chabad shooting? These are hard questions to mull over, as we think about where to focus the part of our minds that we "dedicate" to the world's troubles.)

As I wrote to my congregation Saturday evening, *Kol yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*, all of the Jewish world is one family, at times of trial and tragedy even the more so.

All of us are walloped, again, as Jews in prayer were targeted. Victimized. Killed. All of us are wounded as we think of Rabbi Yisroel Goldstein, the first cousin of Rabbi Feigelstock, whose wounds comprise not only missing

fingers from the shooting, but deep emotional ones as he, and his community, will inevitably relive this moment over and over, and as Rabbi Goldstein does the sacred work of helping his community move forward with strength and dignity.

And I remain wounded, and I imagine you remain wounded, from the images in Sri Lanka, with hundreds of Christian worshippers murdered on Easter Sunday. And from the stories in New Zealand, with Muslims gunned down at Friday prayers. And Pittsburgh. And North Carolina's church shootings. And the massacre at the mosque in Quebec City. And historically black churches burned to the ground in Louisiana. And Israeli children living in the Sderot area, for whom rocket-sirens and holding class in bomb shelters remain the norm, even after headlines stop telling their story. And on and on.

We are tired. And we must remain steadfast. We are scared, because “we” have been targeted. But somehow we have to not permit fear to dominate our consciousness and guide our behavior. We wonder when and how it will again be the case that sanctuaries are sanctuaries, that worship is not threatened with bloodshed, that people of all faiths, and no faith, can live without the specter of murder hovering over us.

There is so much to say. And nothing to be said. To paraphrase a conversation I had with Ezra this afternoon in the JCC Cafe, perhaps this week for us is one of slowing down a bit. To take the opportunity—foisted upon us by tragedy—to look a bit deeper than we normally do into the hearts and souls of family members. To treasure this community a bit more, including the ways we work together, particularly in the face of tragedy across religious lines.

It’s a moment to express gratitude to the security staff who have taken on the often thankless, day-to-day work of protecting us. To you our Federation Board and Campaign chairs for raising consciousness of our community and the funds to make sure that we have the resources to feel secure and safe

In all of this I think particularly of the moment in the Seder last week when we broke a perfectly good piece of matza into two. יחץ. Yahatz. The larger half becomes the Afikomen, a treat for the kids, and the table’s dessert. And the smaller half becomes one of the “loaves” that we use for the Motzi blessing later.

To quote a teaching from my rabbinic colleague Rabbi Adam Kligfeld at Temple Beth Am in Los Angeles, where my in-laws daven.

“How odd, and how illustrative. The night we celebrate our freedom, we also celebrate brokenness. Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other special occasions, we say the blessing on two whole loaves. Why, tonight, do we insist on blessing what is broken? Because, perhaps, brokenness is ubiquitous. Freedom comes with a price. Redemption is always leavened with a lack of wholeness that must be adjusted to, even when full slavery is behind us.

We are alive today, and we are broken. We will come to shul this weekend, maybe even more than last weekend, and we will assemble as a larger community to stand with Chabad on Thursday and to stand with the multi-faith community in a rally that RAV and CIJA are working to put together. And we will be in pain, and a bit wary, and more grateful than ever to our guards, and to all of you our community leaders.

We are free. And we remain unliberated, as all humans do, until hatred is eradicated, and terror is gone from this world. That is the heavy price of being alive, of being human, of being Jewish, of having been redeemed, of blessing our bounty over a broken cracker that at this moment is also a torn garment, an act of kriyah, with all of its dignity and grace and meaning and memory.