



MJCS PRESIDENT MONTHLY MESSAGE

Neo-Nazis. White Supremacists. Alt-right. Charlottesville.

Anti-Semitism is real and growing. It is around us, on the college campuses our kids and grandkids attend or will attend, in whispered conversations, and in business hiring. It is shown to us on television and radio, in print and in social media. There are no alternative facts or alternative realities, and truth doesn't change because we decide not to hear it. Anti-Semitism is real. We are their target. They want us gone.

Am I being over-dramatic? I'm not. There is an objective truth here. Over the centuries, tens of millions of our kind have been killed, forced into slavery (including during WWII), denied basic human rights, and driven into exile. Denied education, professions and memberships. The times, places and oppressors were different but their words were always the same. The words I heard, words we all heard, watching Charlottesville unfold.

But their hate and threats are not the biggest threat to American Jews.

The biggest threat is our own apathy and silence.

For many of us watching the tragedy of Charlottesville and witnessing (or purposely ignoring) the rapid growth of anti-Semitism this is not, they believe, the reality of Jewish life in Malibu, or anywhere else in liberal California. Yes, it's sad to watch all of this, they say, but our protections, they believe, remain secure. There's nothing more for us to do.

But there is more.

That security wasn't the truth for a Reform synagogue in Charlottesville that was threatened directly by Neo-Nazis. Or for the wealthy Jewish neighborhood of Sydney Australia whose non-Jewish neighbors this month successfully blocked the building of a synagogue. Or for our own friends in Malibu who encountered a swastika on Winding Way last week.

Despite the centuries of anti-Semitism our people have faced, and the savagery, ugliness, maltreatment and death we have endured, we have not just survived; we have thrived. And each time we rose from the rubble, we made extraordinary advances and contributions to the societies in which we lived in proportions unmatched pro rata to our numbers. In the arts, the sciences, medicine, education,

real estate, entertainment, technology, business, law and, you name it, our people have been at the forefront.

But all of this is threatened. And can be lost. Without your ongoing commitment to our Jewish community, they win. And everything that your parents, your grandparents and their parents and grandparents believed in, fought for, struggled for and died for is for naught.

So what can you do? Participate. Make being Jewish a priority: attend Shabbat services, come to Torah story, learn Jewish history and ethics, and be involved in your children's Jewish education. Support our clergy. Make your voices heard and our solidarity visible. Secure the future of MJCS.

Very simply, show up. Be counted. It makes a difference.

We are at a tipping point. Your ongoing investment in our synagogue and all that it represents is all we have.

Yes, I'm talking about a financial investment, but also an investment of the heart, the soul and the body. We need hearts and minds devoted to wanting our way of being Jewish to continue locally and not fade away into the abyss from lack of investment, care and devotion.

Don't wait for someone else. Don't assume that all will be well without you. We need you. Without you, we have no voice and we have no permanence. We have no future.

As we watch the unfolding of an unprecedented time in our nation and head into the High Holy Days, I truly hope that you will share with me the beauty of who we are and what we stand for, and contribute with your hearts, your voices and yes, your pockets, to all that our synagogue, our clergy, our community and our vision stand for. And this way, together, we will continue to thrive for generations to come. But without it....

Let's keep the candle glowing.

As always, thanks for listening.

Steve Weinberg
President, MJCS