

# SHALOM

*Jewish Peace Letter*

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## Paths to Peace Judaism and Mindfulness

By Richard Middleton-Kaplan

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# Stefan Merken

We were unable to print *SHALOM* for several months because two of our valuable people retired. But now we're back!

## Are We Still Needed?

**T**HE JPF WAS FORMED IN 1941 BECAUSE OF the pressing need to support young Jewish conscientious objectors, many in prison or awaiting prison because they would not serve in the military. In that dark era family and friends often turned on them. Quaker communities stepped forward and offered what support they could but essentially these principled and, sadly, unpopular, Jewish COs were abandoned.

At that moment, two rabbis and one woman employee of a Jewish organization created the JPF. Since then, we've been there during our far too many wars. Given our nation's addiction to military solutions a younger generation will still need to search for answers and responses. No one knows if a draft will ever be reinstated. Most of

our Jewish antiwar groups seem to have vanished, having turned to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. So we ask where young Jews could turn to in the event of yet another war, as I did at age 18 when the JPF was there to help.

*The JPF remains a voice for peace.*

*Do we need to survive and thrive?*

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**STEFAN MERKEN** is chair of the Jewish Peace Fellowship.

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Richard Middleton-Kaplan

## Paths to Peace: Judaism and Mindfulness

**S**HOW ME SOMEONE WHO has achieved complete inner peace through religion, said Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, and I'll show you an idiot.<sup>1</sup> Heschel—who escaped from Poland to come to the United States in 1939, lost much of his family in the Holocaust, and became an active leader in the Civil Rights Movement and the protest against the Vietnam War—felt that prayer should alert us to social injustice, not anaesthetize us to it. Rather than feeling mindlessly content with the world, freed from problems, complacent, or what the rock group Pink Floyd called “comfortably numb,” we should emerge with an increased openness to each other and with a heightened awareness of possibilities for improving the world. Indeed, who could survey the state of our politics or planet and emerge content?

Prayer is agitation, Heschel said. It “is either exceedingly urgent, exceedingly relevant, or inane and useless”; it consists of “a confrontation with Him who demands justice and compassion”; and it “is meaningless unless it is subversive, unless it seeks to overthrow and to ruin the pyramids of callousness, hatred, opportunism, falsehoods.”<sup>2</sup> Prayer stirs us to act in ways that remedy social injustice.

Yet surely there is nothing wrong with the desire for inner peace through prayer. Thinkers such as The Dalai Lama and



the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thích Nhất Hanh contend that we can only spread peace in our families, our communities, and among nations if we first achieve inner peace; once we achieve that inner peace, we can emanate peace outward to our immediate acquaintances and then to the larger concentric circles of relationships that surround us. So the questions are, How do I not become what Heschel would regard as an idiot? How do we balance the sense of agitation that Heschel describes with the inner peace necessary to act effectively? How do we create and preserve it in our daily lives?

The answer may lie in a concept called “mindfulness,” a concept from Buddhism. Mindfulness has become well-integrated with Judaism in recent years—as indicated by books such as Rodger Kamenetz’s ground-breaking 1994 work *The Jew in the Lotus: A Poet’s Rediscovery of Jewish Identity in Buddhist India*, which was followed by Sylvia Boorstein’s *That’s Funny, You Don’t Look Buddhist* (1997), Avram Davis’s *Meditation from the Heart of Judaism* (1999), Jonathan Slater’s *Mindful Jewish Living: Compassionate Practice* (2004), Rabbi Yael Levy’s *Journey through the Wilderness: A Mindfulness Approach to the Ancient Jewish Practice of Counting the Omer* (2012), and Rabbi Jeff Roth’s *Me, Myself, and God: A Theology of Mindfulness* (2016). The mindfulness

1 Abraham Joshua Heschel, “Carl Stern’s Interview with Dr. Heschel,” in *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, ed. Susannah Heschel (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997), p. 402.

2 Abraham Joshua Heschel, “On Prayer,” in *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, pp. 258, 261, 262.

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these authors learned from their immersion in Buddhism is completely compatible with Jewish teaching, and in fact characterizes many Jewish practices that were established centuries before the term “mindfulness” came into being.

## Mindfulness and Judaism

What is mindfulness? Thích Nhất Hanh defines it as “the practice of being aware of our thoughts, our actions, and the consequences of our actions. ... When we are mindful and cultivate compassion in our daily lives, we diminish violence each day. We have a positive effect on our family, friends, and society. ...The practice of mindfulness is simply to bring awareness into each moment of our lives. Mindful living is an art. You do not have to be a monk or live in a monastery to practice mindfulness. You can practice it anytime, while driving your car or doing housework.”<sup>3</sup>

Compare that to this definition from Jewish writer Jonathan Slater, who describes mindfulness as “the capacity to see clearly, with calm and awakened mind and heart, the truth of each moment of our lives.” This enables him to feel “the presence of God in each moment, even in pain and failure.”<sup>4</sup>

Slater and Nhất Hanh agree that “Mindfulness is not

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3 Thích Nhất Hanh, *Creating True Peace: Ending Violence in Yourself, Your Family, Your Community, and the World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), p. 5.

4 Jonathan P. Slater, *Mindful Jewish Living: Compassionate Practice* (New York: Aviv, 2004), pp. xix, xx.

a state; it is a practice. We do not achieve mindfulness once and for all. Rather, we train ourselves to more finely sense and name all aspects of our feelings—physical, emotional, and spiritual.”<sup>5</sup>

They also agree that with the practice of mindfulness and the resulting clarity, they are able to be more compassionate and to do more to emanate peace. For example, Slater finds that “mindful attention to all of life has helped me know great compassion for other people, for their suffering, and also an expansive love for other people.”<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the practice of mindfulness might

provide a way of achieving that balance between the heightened alertness to social injustice that Heschel expects and the inner peace we all desire.

Slater’s *Mindful Jewish Living* connects mindfulness to a specifically Jewish context. Slater devotes chapters to mindfulness in relation to Torah and commandment, prayer, mortality, connecting with others, the Jewish holidays, appetite, and social responsibility. As Slater and Rabbi Levy have discovered, the practice of mindfulness is built into Jewish ritual and daily life. Of course, there is always the danger that rituals become stale, automatic, rote, a mindless—not mindful, going through the motions.

Remarkably, those who designed Jewish rituals thousands of years ago anticipated that problem...and built in ways of countering it. For example, the Yom Kippur haftarah selection from Isaiah 57:14–58:14 reminds us not to allow fasting and praying to degenerate into empty observance and hollow ritual routine.

Many Jewish prayers quite intentionally break us away from the quotidian and instill mindfulness. For instance, there is a prayer to say upon hearing good or bad news, seeing a rainbow, seeing a comet, seeing an exceptionally lofty mountain, seeing an outstanding Torah scholar or secular scholar, seeing 600,000 or more Jews together (which happens to be the exact number of letters in the Torah), seeing a destroyed synagogue or a destroyed synagogue that has been restored, and first meeting a friend who has recovered from a life-threatening illness.

To be alert to such occurrences, and to pause to thank the

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5 *Ibid.*, p. xx.

6 *Ibid.*, p. xx.

creator for them, is to be mindful, alert, “to bring awareness into each moment of our lives,”<sup>7</sup> and to elevate living to an art.

Consider the prayer said upon waking:

“I offer thanks before you, living and eternal Sovereign, for you have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great.” Saying these words every morning reminds us that waking up, which we often complacently take for granted, is not guaranteed. In our return to consciousness, our bodies have been reunited with our souls—emerging from a kind of death, a death of consciousness, during the night—and we experience a renewal not shared by the many people who went to sleep the previous night but did not live through it to encounter a fresh dawn as we have. This increases our compassion too, for in thanking God for compassionately restoring our souls to us, we feel compassion for those who did not arise, and for those whose loved ones did not arise, from the night.

Through heightened awareness and Jewish prayer, we can rescue any moment from the mundane, and inject holiness and sacredness into it. That is mindful living.

## *Mindful Action for Social Justice*

Heschel said that prayer should agitate us and spur us to remedy social justice, yes, but he saw no contradiction between that imperative and other purposes for prayer. Consider these statements from his writings:

▼ “The primary purpose of prayer...is to praise, to sing, to chant. Because the essence of prayer is a song, and man cannot live without a song.”<sup>8</sup>

▼ “Ultimately the goal of prayer is not to translate a word but to translate the self; not to render an ancient vocabulary in modern terminology, but to transform our lives into prayers.”<sup>9</sup>

7. Nhât Hanh, op cit., p. 5.

8. Heschel, “Carl Stern’s Interview with Dr. Heschel,” op cit., p. 397.

9. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Man’s Quest for God* (New

## Through heightened awareness and Jewish prayer, we can rescue any moment from the mundane, and inject holiness and sacredness into it.

Heschel found no contradiction in regarding prayer as song, transformation, and agitation. “Prayer is action,”<sup>10</sup> he wrote, and that included political action. As his daughter Susannah recalled, “For him, politics and theology were always entwined. After the civil-rights march in Selma, he said, ‘I felt my legs were praying.’ Even as social protest was for him a religious experience, religion without indignation at social evils was also impossible.”<sup>11</sup> Heschel remains urgently relevant for us today partly because he exemplified how to transform a life into prayer.

The intense focus of prayer—as action and as agitation and as song—can embody the practice of intensified spiritual attention and compassionate action that we have learned from Buddhists to call “mindfulness,” exactly what the Book of Isaiah says constitutes a meaningful fast stirred by compassion for our fellow beings in which we “unlock the shackles of injustice,” share our bread with the hungry, clothe the naked, satisfy the needs of the afflicted...and thereby find peace. With Yom Kippur now behind us, our challenge is to carry forward mindful practice in ways that both enhance our inner peace and social justice in the wider world.

York: Scribner, 1954), p. 17.

10. Heschel, “On Prayer,” op cit., p. 257.

11. Susannah Heschel, “Introduction,” in *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, pp. vi-viii.

# SHALOM

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Murray Polner

## They Stood Their Ground Against War

**T**HE IRAQ-AFGHAN WAR IS NOTHING compared to the Great War. Adam Hochschild's absolutely brilliant and eloquent *To End All Wars: A Study of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918* reported that a US War Department study in 1924 concluded that more than 8.6 million soldiers were killed and over 21 million were wounded in the four-years of mass, industrialized violence and the prostitution of science for purposes of sheer destruction--which continues apace today in American and Russian and Chinese laboratories getting ready for WW III.

WWI was a slaughterhouse, and the more cannon fodder the disputants needed the more they drafted anyone left standing including married men with children. In Britain, the upper, educated class's young men were killed and crippled at an alarming rate, which fascinated Americans drawn to the aura of a war with no blood or amputated limbs in *Upstairs Downstairs* and *Downton Abbey*. The reality was quite another thing, Hochschild tells us. Lord Salisbury, a former British PM, lost five grandsons; PM Herbert Asquith's eldest son was killed in battle as were the two sons of the future PM Bonar Law. 18-year-old John Kipling died in France after which his super hawk father Rudyard, the perennial flag waver who never wore a military uniform, grieved deeply, and composed a couplet in "Epitaphs of the War": "If any question why we died/Tell them, because our fathers lied."

Hochschild's book recalled the courage of the British men and women who so objected to the war they instead chose to suffer prison, starvation, torture, loss of jobs, family breakups and death threats. 20,000 Britons chose conscientious objection and prison, among them Tom Attlee, the elder brother of Clement Attlee, the future Prime Minister, and Bertrand Russell, who also led a campaign to delegitimize the pointless Vietnam War.

Caroline Moorehead's equally incisive and revealing *Troublesome People: The Warriors of Pacifism* described her nation's resisters' experiences during the war. "Some have risked the death penalty rather than alter their view and some indeed have died for it, a few, their health and spirit broken by punishment, have gone mad. There is stubbornness, obduracy, about pacifism that can be infuriating; it can be heroic, admirable."

From where did their refusal to kill come? From many sources, of course, but essentially religious and secular beliefs. From Leo Tolstoy, whose *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* greatly influenced Gandhi. Tolstoy preached refusal to

accept war and freeing men and women from its curse. "Universal military service," said Tolstoy, "is the last stage of violence that governments need for the maintenance of the whole structure ... and its removal would bring down the whole building." In the US, Objectors were moved by the pencil-maker Henry Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience," who preferred an overnight jailhouse stay rather than support Polk's imperial, pro-slavery war with Mexico and with socialism, however they defined the term.

Books I've just read or re-read look back at the failed antiwar efforts to prevent WWI. In 1915, one year after the European empires began butchering millions of their men and women, sol-

diers and civilians alike, a pop song swept American music stores whose chorus began "I didn't raise my son to be a soldier." Many decades later the soldier-son of a bereaved and angry mother named Cindy Sheehan was killed in Iraq chasing those Bush-Cheney WMDs, for which she was rebuked for defaming the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave "Before one more mother's child is lost," she shouted, and we are now entering our seventeenth year of war.

Michael Kazin's new book *War Against War: The American Fight for Peace 1914-1918* vividly takes us back to Woodrow Wilson's reign and evokes the story of the lies, propaganda and bitter debates of that era. The men and women Kazin

**“What harm  
did he do Thee,  
O Lord?”—  
an inscription  
placed by parents  
on the grave of  
their son, killed  
at Gallipoli.**

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respects and admires tried for three years to keep the US from entering the war.

At the start, Kazin explains his point of view: “I wish the US had stayed out of the Great War. Imperial Germany posed no great threat to the American homeland and no long-term threat to its economic interests, and the consequences of its defeat made the world a more dangerous place.”

What Kazin, professor of history at Georgetown, does is look at the pacifists and the socialists, trade unionists, women’s groups, and others who chose to say NO! as Wilson and America remained on the sidelines for three years before deciding that the nation had to enter the war. *War Against*

*War* is a convincing warning about the falsehoods and self-deception that drew us into WWI and later into Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The people he and I honor are Morris Hillquit, the Socialist Party labor lawyer; Crystal Eastman, a mesmeric organizer and editor, the leading light who helped organize women and liberal pacifists; Jane Addams, the most remembered of all, pacifist, Hull House co-founder, Women’s Peace Party organizer and Nobel Laureate who, in 1915, explained that “the chief skepticism pacifism meets comes from a widely accepted conviction that war is a necessary and inevitable factor in human affairs,” adding, “children should no longer be slain as living sacrifices upon the altar of tribal gods,” subversive words which led the Daughters of the American Revolution to revoke her membership; Claude Kitchin, the southern House Majority Leader, whose father fought for the Confederacy; Randolph Bourne, whose words “War is the health of the state” are more than ever relevant today; A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, African American socialists, anti-war and anti-imperialists; Robert and Fola LaFollette, Wisconsin’s husband and wife progressives; pacifist Rabbi Judah Magnes, inspired by the prophet Jeremiah and Gandhi, first president and Chancellor of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and advocate for an Arab-Jewish bi-national country; Senator George Norris (“Their object in having war and in preparing for war is to make money .... Wall Street considers only the dollars and cents.”) and the pacifist-socialist Helen Keller (“Congress is not preparing to defend the people of the US. It is planning to protect the capital of American speculators and investors [and] benefit the manufacturers of munitions and machines”). Their names and achievements have been erased from our national memory.

We’ve also largely forgotten, as the late Tom Hayden put it in his final book, *Hell No. The Forgotten Power of the Vietnam Peace Movement*, the “draft resisters, opposition among GIs, deserters to Canada and other countries, prayer vigils, moratoriums, letters written to Congress, civil disobedience,



*American troops in the field during World War I*

peace campaigns for Congress and massive teach-ins.” And I would add Senator George McGovern and Martin Luther King Jr., who delivered anti-Vietnam War speeches at the Riverside Church in Manhattan in April 1967 and then at a huge rally in Central Park. And, Dorothy Day, Dan and Phil Berrigan and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel and the millions of Americans who marched and worked and took risks to end a sinful war that killed 58,000 US soldiers, far more wounded in body and mind, and several million Asians. So many protestors yesterday, so silent today.

I’ve just read Denise Grady’s *NY Times* article buried on page 15 (Jan. 15, 2017) of the 1,367 young soldiers who received devastating wounds to their genitourinary tracts in Iraq or Afghanistan and many may never be able to conceive a child. Many have also received traumatic brain injuries, pelvic fractures, colorectal damage and amputations.

That’s because in the end, loyalty to one’s country prevails in every war in every nation. W.B. Sledge was a Marine in WWII and his striking book, *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*, reeks with misery and death and sadness. “War,” concludes this Marine combat vet, “is brutish, inglorious and a terrible waste. Combat leaves an indelible mark on those who are forced to endure it.” But then he closes with the dominant appeal of blood and faithfulness and the sense of what he owes to his country. “As the troops used to say, ‘If the country is good enough to live in, it’s good enough to fight for.’ With privilege comes responsibility.” Such sentiments, even about wars that should never have been fought, have always trumped those who tried to resist their country’s war party. Rest assured, patriotic Americans, no VIP who sent them to the Middle Eastern wars will ever be reprimanded.

I leave the last wise words to Kazin, whose book deserves your attention. The WWI anti-war heroes argued “passionately and consistently, that a durable settlement depended on the US forging a tolerant, non-aggressive relationship with other nations -- one based not on preparing for war but on avoiding it.”

Lawrence Wittner

## Should We Keep Wasting Money on Missile Defense or Invest in Something Useful?

**W**HEN AMERICANS CRITICIZE WASTEFUL government spending, they often fail to realize that the biggest sinkhole for public funds is what's described as "national defense," a program that, all too often, does little or nothing to defend them.

Take national missile defense, a program begun with much fanfare during the mid-1980s, when President Ronald Reagan realized that US nuclear weapons could not prevent a nuclear attack upon the United States. According to the President, his Strategic Defense Initiative (lampooned as "Star Wars" by Senator Edward Kennedy) would safeguard Americans by developing a space-based anti-missile system to destroy incoming nuclear missiles. Most scientists doubted its technical feasibility, comparing it to using one speeding bullet to destroy another speeding bullet. Critics also pointed out that development of such a system would simply end up encouraging hostile nations to build more missiles to overwhelm it or, if they wanted to avoid the additional cost, to use decoys to confuse it. In addition, it would create a false sense of security.

Although "Star Wars" was never built, the fantastic dream of a missile shield took hold in Congress, which began to pour billions of dollars into variants of this program. And, today, more than thirty years later, the United States still lacks an effective missile defense system. The U.S. government, however, ignoring this dismal record, continues to lavish vast resources on this unworkable program, which has already cost American taxpayers over \$180 billion.

One of the major components of the missile defense program is the Ground-based Midcourse Defense system. Better known as GMD, it is designed to use ground-based "kill-vehicles" to destroy incoming nuclear missiles by colliding with them. In 2004, before any indication that GMD would work,

President George W. Bush ordered the deployment of its interceptors. Today, there are four located at California's Vandenberg Air Force Base and 26 at Ft. Greely, Alaska, and the Obama administration has given orders to increase the total to 44 by the end of 2017. The GMD cost thus far is \$40 billion.

All of this might be viewed as water under the bridge, or perhaps water down the drain, were it not for the fact that a third GMD site is now being considered. Military contractors are ferociously lobbying for it, communities in New

### Ground Missile Defense test records have not improved in recent years. Quite the contrary.

York, Ohio, and Michigan are actively competing for it and, given long-time Republican enthusiasm for missile defense, this expansion seems very likely to be implemented by the Trump administration. The cost? An additional \$4 billion.

Is this a good investment? GMD, it should be noted, was designed to defend against a nuclear attack by Iran or North Korea. But, thanks to the Iran nuclear agreement, its nuclear program is frozen until 2030 or later. North Korea is also not a nuclear threat to the United States, for it does not possess long-range missiles. Of 14 North Korean missiles tested during 2016, some failed to clear the launch pad while others traveled distances ranging from 19 miles to 620 miles. Naturally, as a small-scale system, GMD would be of no value against Russia's enormous nuclear arsenal.

In fact, at this point GMD is of no value against anything. Thus far, the Pentagon has conducted 17 tests of GMD interceptors since 1999—all in conditions that should produce success. In a situation quite unlike armed combat, the people conducting the tests knew the speed, location, and trajectory of the mock enemy missiles ahead of time, as well as when they would be launched. Nevertheless, the GMD system failed the tests eight times—a 47 percent failure rate.

Nor has the GMD test record been improving in recent years. Quite the contrary. GMD has failed six of its last 10

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tests and three of its last four. In mid-2016, a report written by three physicists and released by the Union of Concerned Scientists declared that the GMD system is “simply unable to protect the U.S. public.” Indeed, they concluded, “the system is not even on a path to achieve a useful ability” to do so.

Why, then, despite the enormous cost and the lack of useful results over many years, is this project continuing? One factor is clearly the U.S. fear of hostile governments. Beyond this, however, as David Willman, a journalist who has done extensive investigations of GMD, has reported, lies “the muscle wielded in Washington by major defense contractors, which have billions of dollars of revenue at stake.” Three of them, in fact—Boeing, Raytheon, and Northrop Grumman—donated \$40.5 million to congressional campaign funds from 2003 through October 2016.

GMD “will not work,” U.S. Representative John Garamendi, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, told Willman. “Nevertheless, the momentum of the fear, the momentum of the investments, the momentum of the industry” carry it forward.

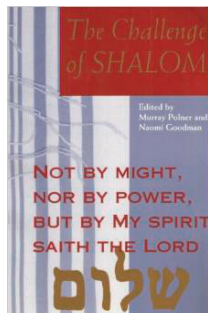
A key factor keeping billions of U.S. tax dollars flowing to this ill-conceived project is the desperation of declining American communities, anxious to attract the jobs a GMD installation would provide. The three communities vying to house the third GMD site are all in the hard-hit Rust Belt, and their public officials are eager to secure it. “Our community has been dying a little bit at a time,” an Ohio mayor explained. “So we’re hoping that the [local] site is selected.”

But if the only good reason for missile defense is that it provides a jobs program, why not invest those billions of dollars in jobs doing useful things? Why not invest in factories turning out solar and wind power components, high-speed rail cars, and inexpensive medicines? Why not invest in health care clinics, day care centers, libraries, schools, job-training facilities, community centers, concert halls, bridges, roads, inexpensive housing, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes?

This country has made useful investments before. With the political will, it could do so again.



USS Lake Erie Missile test



### *The Challenge of Shalom: The Jewish Tradition of Peace and Justice*

Edited by Murray Polner and Naomi Goodman

Highlights the deep and powerful tradition of Jewish nonviolence. With reverence for life, passion for justice, and empathy for the suffering, Jews historically have practiced a “uniquely powerful system of ethical peacefulness.” *The Challenge of Shalom* includes sections on the Tradition, the Holocaust, Israel, Reverence for all life and Personal Testimonies. **\$18.95 per copy, plus \$5 shipping.**

Patrick Henry

# We Will Not Let America Hate Again

(Speech delivered at the Women's March, Walla Walla, WA, Jan. 21, 2017)

**I**HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SAY A FEW WORDS about the Jewish and Muslim members of our community. I am honored to do so.

But, first, take a look around you and see how many “old people” are gathered here today.

We are here today because we were born and lived for two or three decades in a country where, in certain areas, African-Americans could not drink out of the same water fountains as white people. They could not go to school with white people nor sit next to them on buses.

We are here today because, during those decades, in certain areas, consensual sex between adults of the same gender was punishable by years in prison and women everywhere were systematically turned down for jobs even when they had far superior qualifications.

We are here today because we've been working to rectify that situation and have lived to see:

- 👇 The desegregation of the national pastime, baseball
- 👇 The desegregation of the Armed Forces
- 👇 The desegregation of public schools
- 👇 The Civil Rights Movement
- 👇 The rise of the Women's Movement
- 👇 The appointment of women to the United States Supreme Court
- 👇 The passage of Roe vs Wade
- 👇 The legalization of interracial and gay marriages [and]
- 👇 The birth of the Transgender Rights Movement

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**PATRICK HENRY** is the author of *\*We Only Know Men. The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust\** (Catholic University of America Press, 2007) and the editor of *\*Jewish Resistance Against the Nazis\** (Catholic University of America Press, 2014). He is Cushing Eells Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and Literature at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington.

We are here today because we have not been building walls during the past 50 years. We have been tearing them down and building bridges in their place.

We are here today because we have set the nation on a journey from the darkness and ugliness of racism, bigotry, misogyny, and homophobia to those still distant sunny shores of total inclusion and equality for all people living in our country. We may not make it to those shores with you, my young friends, but we have had the vision and are content to have helped pave the way.

I do not know if the arc of the moral universe bends toward justice, but I do know that decades of hard work, moral probing, and successful legislation have helped to create a more just and inclusive America.

We are here today, finally, to proclaim as loudly and as clearly as possible that we are not going back to the America we were born in. We remember too vividly the dogs, the fire hoses, the beatings at the lunch counters, the suffering of so many, and our own nightmares.

So I say to our Jewish friends and neighbors that we stand hand and hand with you, with the Holocaust Center for Humanity in Seattle, with our own Beth Israel and Whitman's Hillel Chapter, and with the good people of Whitefish, Montana and the Flathead Valley who have just recently stood up to the Neo-Nazis in their area who then decided to cancel their anti-Semitic march planned for this week. We too proclaim our never again to the isolated but increasing number of anti-Semitic incidents in different areas all over the country.

I want to assure our Muslim brothers and sisters that we are working with good friends at the Islamic Center of the Tri-Cities to promote interfaith friendships and joint social activities. Our goal is to come together more closely to prevent anti-Islamic hate incidents in our area. When I asked one of my friends at the Tri-Cities mosque, Yehia Ibrahim, what he wanted me to say today, he said: “Encourage every-

**We have set the nation on a journey to total inclusion and equality.**

one to get to know a Muslim. We are all around, neighbors, physicians, engineers, nurses, scientists, teachers. I am optimistic,” he concluded, “and have faith in my country that love and goodness will prevail.”

Finally, as others will make clear this morning, I want to assure the Latino Community that they are our valued friends and neighbors and that we will not allow them to be victimized.

Specifically, we will resist nonviolently, but tenaciously and relentlessly, any attempts to:

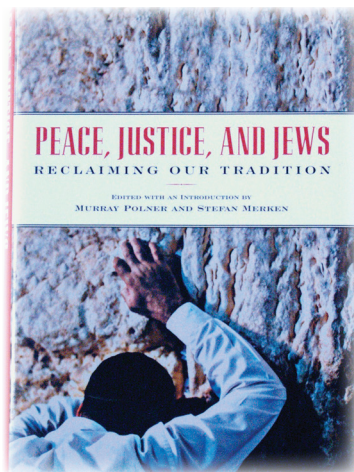
- ☞ Register individuals on the basis of ethnicity or religion.
- ☞ Harass law-abiding persons regarding their immigration status.
- ☞ Round up law-abiding individuals for possible deportation.

It is not only that there is enough room for all of us to live



*Patrick Henry speaking at the Walla Walla Women’s March on Jan 21, 2017. Police estimated that more than 2,400 people marched*

together, to love together, and to thrive together in the Walla Walla Valley, it’s that our community is stronger and richer because of its diversity. We are determined to keep it that way.



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