

Dear Friends,

I write this letter to you having just returned home from the annual 9/11 Manhasset Memorial service. It's hard to believe that sixteen years have passed since the fall of the Towers; nor can I believe that the events of that terrible day are no more real for our synagogue school kids than World War II was for me at their age. That, of course, is the dynamic of history. What fills the front pages of today's newspapers, soon become subjects listed in the indices of history textbooks.

But then one can turn to the not so distant past for life changing events. In the past six weeks, we have witnessed the insanity of Charlottesville, Virginia, and the inanity of Washington D.C., which will inform, if not determine, our nation's future. Added to these human-made disasters, we have experienced hurricanes that have devastated the greater Houston area and much of the Caribbean and our country's southeast. An earthquake in Mexico took more lives than both hurricanes together.

If I were a different kind of religious leader, I might see these natural catastrophes as a divine response to our misdeeds, as God's tremors in anticipation of an End Time. But as a Reconstructionist Jew, I understand that nature is random. What is not random, are our responses to it. The power of 'together' can certainly help mitigate political aberrations and the trauma resulting from nature's fury. This is a lesson we can learn from the solar eclipse that we witnessed nine days after Charlottesville. While some people of faith might consider the eclipse another cosmic sign of the apocalypse, I understood it to be a metaphor for action. Now it's all about the corona when it comes to an eclipse. Although the sun's corona is constant, because of the sun's brilliance, the corona is fully visible only at the time of an eclipse when the sun and the moon become one. That's when the light shines brightest. And so it is with us. We each radiate warmth and light as individuals, but we shine brighter still when we are unified in action. So on this threshold of the New Year, pledge to join a demonstration of like-minded people for a cause that will help to rebalance the world, and contribute funds toward the rebuilding of damaged communities. We may well be subject to the political whims of others, and to the winds of Harvey and Irma, but we can still bring change and healing in their wakes.

I wish you a year of hope, promise and the work that comes with it.

Warmly,

*Lee*