

# Another Voice: Amid rise of anti-Semitism, friends stand with us

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I still believe we live in a democratic and civil society. As former director of the Holocaust Resource Center, and married to a child of Holocaust survivors, I know too well that hate exists. And despite witnessing the rise of anti-Semitism, I still believe in our society.

Yes, there have been horrific acts fueled by anti-Semitism in Pittsburgh, Poway, Jersey City, New York City and, most recently, Monsey.

This is why I still believe: Within hours of the Monsey Chanukah attack, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, Attorney General Letitia James, and all level of politicians and law enforcement committed themselves to the same goals: to bring the perpetrator to justice, to condemn this act of terrorism and federal hate crime and assure the Jewish community of its safety.

As Rabbi Donniel Hartman, of the Shalom Hartman Institute, wrote, “It is critical that we remember that we are not fighting government-instituted anti-Semitism, but an anti-Semitism which the government is committed to fighting.”

Rev. Al Sharpton called upon the African American community to reflect on why some have a hatred of Jews: “We cannot remain silent as we see a consistent pattern of attacks against people based on their faith and based on who they are. And therefore, we wanted to convene to say, ‘You can’t fight hate against you unless you’re willing to fight hate against everyone else.’”

Those marginalized and discriminated against should band together, to combat the evil of stereotyping and hate. We have always been, and continue to be, stronger together.

I am encouraged by Christian organizations who reached out to those in pain and fear to say Hineini, in Hebrew, “I am here,” here to stand by you.

These voices were drowned out in 1938 during Kristallnacht, as German synagogues and Jewish-owned stores were smashed and looted. They were drowned out when people of color were taken into slavery, murdered and dehumanized. It continues as systemic racism persists in criminal justice, education, housing and employment. But the voices of unity are now being heard.

They are heard when the Buffalo Jewish Federation held its annual meeting at Northland Workforce Training Center, showcasing programs aimed at those disproportionately cut out of educational and economic opportunity.

They are heard when JCRC partnered with Burchfield Penney Art Center, highlighting criminal justice messages through the art of Valentino Dixon, a Buffalonian who spent 27 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. They are heard when a multicultural women’s group visits a Sikh Gurdwara temple, attends U.S. naturalization ceremonies, share Iftar meals and huddle in cold sukkot (huts) with a bowl of warm squash soup during a Jewish festival.

The world is not falling apart. Our friends demonstrate the importance of showing up for each other. We need to repeat this aloud with word and deed: “Hineini.” I stand with you.

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