

# RABBIS AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE



TOOL KIT FOR SEPTEMBER 25, 2016  
CONCERT ACROSS AMERICA

Rabbis Against Gun Violence is proud to be a partner with the Concert Across America when we will remember the victims of America's gun violence epidemic with a series of live music events from coast to coast and literally raise our voices in a call to action



## **HERE IS WHAT THE ORGANIZERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE CONCERT ACROSS AMERICA**

*(Adapted/ excerpted from the information on the Concert website: <http://remembersept25.org>)*

**WHY MOBILIZE WITH MUSIC?** The power of music to reach far and wide has fueled countless important movements in recent decades. Now is the time to turn up the music to turn down the hateful rhetoric that has become a hallmark of the gun debate.

**WHY ON SEPTEMBER 25TH?** In 2007, Congress designated September 25 as the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims. Although two out of every three victims are killed with a firearm, Congress has failed to enact measures that could save lives and protect our communities. While we need to be respectful of what this day stands for, we must also demand that Congress act on gun safety legislation.

**WHY “ACROSS” THE COUNTRY?** We are one nation and we must join together to protect our loved ones and each other. Tragically, roughly 91 people die from guns every day here in the U.S.

**WHERE WILL THE CONCERTS BE?** Wherever you will be. Got a guitar and a mic? Sing outside your Congressperson’s local office. Need more of an audience? Invite camera crews and news reporters. Belong to a synagogue? Let the choir or your members do the singing.

**WILL THE CONCERTS CONNECT?** Yes! The #ConcertAcrossAmerica to #EndGunViolence will connect through social media. More details later how to #RememberSept25 as a day to honor victims.

**WHO’S BEHIND THIS EFFORT?** We’re a national network of organizations, activists and artists in complete harmony over the need to keep guns out of dangerous hands.

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

We urge all to participate in some way – attend a Community Concert in your area OR plan a music event using this toolkit – we make it VERY EASY for you with ideas and materials. Your “event” can be very low-key, as simple as incorporating some songs into a service, but still can be very high impact. We are well aware that the timing for this may not be ideal, coming so close to the High Holy Days, but being tied to the date set by Congress did not leave flexibility. At the same time, we find it fitting that it falls on the weekend of *Selichot* and in the month of Elul, with the emphasis on introspection and soul searching.



In this toolkit you will find ways to participate, suggestions for planning a musical event, ideas for connecting your plans to the themes of Elul/Selichot, a list of songs to consider, a flyer template, and more. A Table of Contents follows.

**If you plan to participate *in any way*, please email us at [rabbisagv@gmail.com](mailto:rabbisagv@gmail.com) and let us know.** Why? Because that way we can (1) help support you – including publicizing your event if you want, (2) keep you up to date with resources and information as they become available, (3) connect you as appropriate with other local events as well as those across the country and with the national organizers, (4) be aware of what our members and supporters are doing... and more.

Thank you for your commitment to help curb the rampant gun violence that is killing and injuring too many precious lives and devastating those who love them.

Eileen Soffer  
National Coordinator  
Rabbis Against Gun Violence  
[rabbisagv@gmail.com](mailto:rabbisagv@gmail.com)



## SEPTEMBER 25<sup>th</sup> CONCERT ACROSS AMERICA

### RABBIS AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE TOOLKIT

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## I

### HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

Please remember: if you plan to participate *in any way*, email us at [rabbisagv@gmail.com](mailto:rabbisagv@gmail.com) and let us know!

#### A. ATTEND A COMMUNITY CONCERT

On September 25, 2016, there will be a series of community concerts taking place across the country. As of the end of July, community concerts are already planned in Arizona (Tempe), California (L.A. and Santa Barbara, soon SF too), Louisiana (New Orleans), Massachusetts (Boston), Missouri (St. Louis), New Jersey (Ewing and Montclair), Pennsylvania (York), Texas (Denton), Virginia (Tysons Corner),

Check here to learn more about community concerts: <https://www.facebook.com/RememberSept25/events/>

If there is no community concert listed in your area, check back again soon as more continue to be added.

#### B. PLAN YOUR OWN LOCAL MUSICAL EVENT

Remember, you can keep it simple – incorporating some songs into an existing service or program or planning something very low key. Whatever you do will contribute one more event to the larger series of events, and the impact will reverberate across the country. The possibilities for what to do and how to do it are limited only by your imagination. Below are just a few ideas.

##### 1. SYNAGOGUES / JEWISH COMMUNITY SPACES AS VENUES

###### Plan an Event for Sunday, September 25

Consider planning an event at your Synagogue, Jewish Community Center, Senior Center, Day School...

Ask one or several of your musically talented clergy, staff or members to choose some songs to sing accompanied by instruments or not; set the time and place; and then invite people to attend. The musicians can make it a “performance,” lead a sing-a-long, or do a combination. They can use well-known songs or teach newer songs. (If you want people to sing newer songs, it will help to have song sheets available.) The event can be open to the public or for members only.

If your venue has religious school on Sunday, consider holding your music event at the same time and inviting parents to stay. Depending on the songs you plan to sing, words you plan to share or tone you plan to set, consider including the kids for some, or all, of the event.

Please take pictures and/or record the event and share it via social media using these hashtags: #RememberSept25 #ConcertAcrossAmerica #EndGunViolence



### Plan a Saturday Night Event for September 24

Before your community's *Selichot* service, include some songs and perhaps some readings. Although *Selichot* is the evening before the Sunday Sept 25 Concert Across America, on the Jewish calendar the day of the concert has begun at sunset so you are on the right day!! See below for some specific ways to tie the themes of the Concert Across America to *Selichot*.

Please take pictures and/or record some or all of what you do and then share it on Sunday when social media will be lit up with the other events. Use these hashtags: #RememberSept25 #ConcertAcrossAmerica #EndGunViolence

### Incorporate Singing into Your Shabbat Service on September 23-24

Although it won't be on September 25, your singing will still connect your community to the larger effort. Add a song or two to the service. Or dedicate songs you would be singing anyway to the memory of the victims of gun violence with a commitment to act on their behalf.

If your community allows photography and /or recording on Shabbat, you can consider sharing your event on Sunday when social media will be lit up with the other events.

## 2. HOME VENUES

Invite family and friends – maybe make it a havurah or book group event - and sing together in your/their home. It can be informal with everyone invited to bring instruments and song sheets or more formal with only a few people designated to lead.

Please take pictures and/or record the event and share it via social media using these hashtags: #RememberSept25 #ConcertAcrossAmerica #EndGunViolence

## 3. OUTDOOR / PUBLIC VENUES

Make your musical event a public “action” that both remembers gun violence victims and calls for a legislative response. How? Sing outside the district office of an elected official who has refused to support common sense gun safety legislation. Bring as many people as you can. Invite the media. Or set up in another public space – a park, downtown corner, etc. - where you can have an impact on people who may not be aware or engaged in any way. Bring a crowd or just a few people. Invite the media or not. Be sure to check about legal/permitting requirements. Please take pictures and/or record the event and share it via social media using these hashtags: #RememberSept25 #ConcertAcrossAmerica #EndGunViolence



### C. PLAN A POP-UP CONCERT AT A NATIONAL LANDMARK/SIGNIFICANT LOCATION

Pop-Up Concerts are needed at National Landmarks - from the Grand Canyon to the Golden Gate Bridge, Virginia Tech to Provincetown, MA, the Motown Museum to Strawberry Fields

**When:** Any time in your time zone, starting at sunrise on Wednesday, Sept 21 to sunset on Sunday, Sept 25.

**What:** Pop-up publicity concerts to call attention to the “Concert Across America to End Gun Violence.”

**Who:** Solo musician or a duo, an ensemble or an orchestra  
Bring a friend (or several) to videotape you on a smart phone (horizontal view), then upload to social media using these hashtags:  
#RememberSept25 #ConcertAcrossAmerica #EndGunViolence  
Tag your local U.S. Senator and Congressman too.

**Where:** At any recognizable national landmark or otherwise significant location.

**Why:** To call attention to America’s gun violence epidemic in this crucial presidential election.

**Music:** Please perform at least 3 songs or pieces:  
Amazing Grace  
2 other short songs/pieces of your choice

If you are planning a pop-up concert, please e-mail the details of where and when you expect to perform to [Rabbisagv@gmail.com](mailto:Rabbisagv@gmail.com) AND [RememberSept25@gmail.com](mailto:RememberSept25@gmail.com) [Louise@MAGVA.us](mailto:Louise@MAGVA.us)



## II

### SONG SUGGESTIONS AND PLAY LIST

- [Olam Chesed Yibaneh](#) - R. Menachem Creditor
- Original composition commissioned for this event – *available soon*
- Gesher Tzar M'Od
- Im Ein Ani Li Mi Li
- Lo Alecha
- Lo Yisa Goy
- We Shall Overcome
- Amazing Grace
- Down By The River Side (Study War No More)
- And The Youth Shall See Visions - Debbie Friedman
- Not By Might - Debbie Friedman
- Blowing In The Wind - Bob Dylan
- If I Had A Hammer - Lee Hays and Pete Seeger
- Turn, Turn, Turn - Pete Seeger
- No Easy Walk To Freedom - Peter Yarrow

Rabbis Against Gun Violence Playlist

<http://tinyurl.com/RAGVplaylistConcert2EndGV>



### III

## CONNECTING THE CONCERT ACROSS AMERICA TO THEMES OF ELUL / SELICHOT

The entire month of *Elul*, leading up to the Jewish High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, is one of **self-examination, reflection and study**. It is a time to contemplate where we have “missed the mark,” seek forgiveness and turn our lives around. One custom for this period includes blowing the shofar every morning (except Shabbat and the last day of the month) to “wake” us from slumber. Also during Elul, many Jews visit family graves, bringing the deceased into the bond of life through memory. Then, beginning on the Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah, special prayers for forgiveness – *Selichot* – are recited. Since tradition says that the heavens are most open to prayer at midnight, many communities gather at that time (or close to that late) for a special *Selichot* service.

Taking place on the day after *Selichot* services, the **Concert Across America** - which asks us to remember those killed by gun violence and commit to action in their memory - touches on many of the themes of *Elul* and *Selichot*.

**Below are some readings, poetry and reflections** that you can consider including in your musical event to connect the themes of *Elul/Selichot* to those of the Concert. Whether you use some of these selections as part of an actual *Selichot* service on Saturday evening or part of a musical event on Sunday, we hope they will enrich the experience.

#### List of Readings (content/themes)

- **Rise Up, Choose Life** by Rabbi Menachem Creditor (Repentance, call for action)
- **For the Sin We Have Committed** by Rabbi Kim Blumenthal (Confessional prayer, call to action)
- **Waking Up: Gun Violence & Inequality** by Rabbi Lauren Grabelle Herrmann (Shofar awakening, call to action)
- **Numbers** by Rabbi Evan Schultz (Reflection on gun deaths with a prayer for hope and strength to speak and act)
- **From Chicago to Orlando: The Terror of Gun Violence and a Jewish Call for Action** by Rabbi Ben Greenberg (Acting on prayer to fight gun violence)
- **Prayers Alone Are Not Enough** by Rabbi Jill Berkson Zimmerman (Call to action)
- **The Courage to Press Forward** by Rabbi Shawn Israel Zevit (Prayer for those affected by gun violence, call to action)
- **Prayer for Peace** by Rabbi Sara O'Donnell Adler (Prayer for peace, end to violence)



- **Prayer for Peace** by Rabbi Lev Meirowitz (Prayer for peace, healing, comfort)
- **Today the World is Born: A Rosh haShannah Kavannah** by Rabbi Menachem Creditor (Prayer for healing from gun violence)
- **For the Too-Often Wounded: Closing benediction to Greater Washington DC Orlando Solidarity Event** by Rabbi Lauren Holtzblatt and Rabbi Aaron Alexander (Prayer for healing, peace, strength and courage to act)
- **We Remember Them** by Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Riemer (Remembrance of those who have died)
- **Each of Us Has A Name** by Zelda, translated by Marcia Lee Falk (Remembrance of those who have died)
- **Merger Poem** by Judy Chicago (Vision for a future like Eden)
- **The Diameter of the Bomb** by Yehuda Amichai; translated by Chana Bloch (Impact of violence)

### **Rise Up, Choose Life**

By Rabbi Menachem Creditor

God, we know we must act,  
and we know that, in order to act,  
we must feel the urgency — Your Urgency.  
We must channel Your pain  
at the deaths of Your children  
and remind our lawmakers to choose life.  
We've been too quiet,  
mistaking status updates and reactionary prayers  
for true repentance for the worship of a weapon.  
Our nation has endured  
the epidemic of Gun Violence  
for far too long.  
We pray to You for renewal  
as we spread our protective wings over one another again,  
running to justice,  
refusing weariness,  
and choosing life.  
May we sing louder than weapons and merit to see You in each other's eyes,  
sanctifying Your Name  
by standing together  
by rising up again,  
this time rebuilding Your World  
by saving each other.



## **For the Sin We Have Committed**

By Rabbi Kim Blumenthal

*(Excerpt)*

During the course of Yom Kippur we have several opportunities to address our wrongdoings, both on an individual level and a communal level. In using the term “we” instead of “I” during our *selichot* prayers we recognize the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel: “In a free society, where terrible wrongs exist, some are guilty, all are responsible.”

Our confessional prayers are general; they do not address specific societal ills that vary based on time and place. The issue that begs attention this year is gun violence. We have composed a prayer in the style of the “*Al Het (For the Sin of...)*” confessional prayer to approach this wrong that we see but have not solved.

We hope that our prayer will lead to action, and we pray that we will see great, positive developments in the year to come.

May the words of our lips and the prayers of our hearts lead us to holiness, action, and progress on this Yom Kippur and throughout our year.

- For the sin we have committed before You by allowing our nation to have one of the highest rates of gun violence among developed countries.
- For the sin we have committed before You by not honoring the memory of the victims of Aurora, Sandy Hook, Blacksburg, Charleston and all of the others by demanding that our elected officials work together to prevent future tragedies.
- For the sin we have committed before You by knowing that there are countless children who have innocently lost their lives, but not knowing their names or individual stories.
- For the sin we have committed before You by regulating toys and cars and so many other products more seriously than we do guns.
- For the sin we have committed before You by allowing the debate about firearms to focus more on the constitutionally protected right to own a weapon rather than on the responsibility to protect innocent people from potential harm.
- For all of these sins, God of forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.



## **Waking Up: Gun Violence & Inequality**

By Rabbi Lauren Grabelle Herrmann

*(Excerpt)*

Awake, O you sleepers, awake from your sleep!  
O you slumberers, awake from your slumber!  
Search your deeds and turn in Repentance...  
Look to you souls and better your ways and actions  
Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 3:4

I have found myself in the midst of a “wake-up call,” shaking me out of my complacency and calling me into action... This year, when we hear the piercing blast of the shofar:

Let us awaken out of our sleep! May we be able to fully listen, to be present with what is difficult and challenging in our city and in our world so that we can be true and faithful witnesses.

Let us look at our souls and turn in Teshuvah! Let us look inside and consider what each one of us can do to better our neighborhood, our city, our world. Let us turn toward the problem and not away from it.

Let us examine our deeds and better our ways! Let the shofar blast be a clarion call to action. May those actions, no matter how seemingly small, inspire us, our neighbors, and our community.

May this be a year of blessing, of equality, justice and peace for all who dwell on earth.

## **Numbers**

By Rabbi Evan Schultz

*(Excerpt)*

*B'midbar*, in English translated as the book of Numbers – and we too – find ourselves again and again reading of numbers [of people killed in Orlando] that cause us to cry and clench our fists.

The wilderness wasn't supposed to be like this.  
The Numbers were never meant signify this...

*A Prayer*

God, we gather here tonight in our sanctuary,  
our most intimate place of prayer and hope,  
we ask, we affirm  
that You do not give up on our generation.  
Yes, we too find ourselves deep within  
the midbar, the wilderness.



We know that You scream and shriek  
when You hear these numbers,  
when You witness the capabilities of evil.  
But there will be voices that arrive  
out of the wilderness.  
That wilderness will again become  
a place of promise.  
Numbers will once more become  
a symbol for the future...

*A Prayer*

God, what we ask from You is strength.  
What we ask from You is love.  
We know that we need to be the ones  
to stand up, to once again bring light to the midbar,  
to redirect our journey once again  
towards a better place, a Promised Land,  
to be counted as the ones  
who made the moral choice  
to cross the desert to be that voice,  
those voices that ring out in the desert.

**From Chicago to Orlando:  
The Terror of Gun Violence and a Jewish Call for Action**  
Rabbi Ben Greenberg

*(Excerpt)*

In Hebrew, *le'hitpalel* means to pray, but it is written in the reflexive form, The direct object of the verb is the same as its subject. In prayer we not only pray towards God but we pray towards ourself. We evaluate ourselves and our actions in the light of the prayers we recite.

Every prayer uttered on behalf of the victims of gun violence is not truly articulated unless it brings us to direct action.

For the sake of the more than 6,000 victims of gun violence in the United States thus far in 2016 let us truly act on those prayers.



## **Prayers Alone Are Not Enough**

Rabbi Jill Berkson Zimmerman

Prayers alone didn't get us out of Egypt.  
No, we stood up and walked out of Egypt  
We stood up at the Warsaw Ghetto  
We stood up to huge countries intent on destroying Israel.  
We prayed with our feet for civil rights.  
We rose up against unjust wars.  
We stood up for women's rights.  
We stood up for marriage equality.  
Standing up is in our bones, our cells, and our very beings  
We rise up against injustice -  
Even, maybe even more so,  
when it is for other people's wellbeing.  
We LIVE "nobody's free until all of us are free."  
Now is another time that calls us to once again,  
stand up.  
Prayers alone will never work.  
Change comes when we move, act, rise up, stand up.  
Our country must be take action against the gun epidemic.  
We MUST make it impossible to buy an assault weapon.  
It is our inalienable right to be safe in our  
High Schools, theaters, dance clubs, summer parties.  
Our synagogues and churches.  
Elementary schools.

## **The Courage to Press Forward**

Rabbi Shawn Israel Zevit

Praying for the souls of the dead,  
the support for the survivors and their families  
and the courage to press forward  
with gun control in this country.  
Radical love is the antidote for radical hate.  
The heart of our work is recognizing  
that our humanity unites all of us.  
We must use every ounce of our being  
to counter this culture  
of dehumanization that infects our communities.  
We lift up prayers for victims, families and friends.  
We sit in protest or rise and walk in activist spirit



In the pursuit of Tzedek (Justice)  
and Rachamim (Loving Compassion)  
God is in this Place  
And we must know it!  
Newtown, Charleston, Aurora, Orlando, San Bernardino, Columbine, Fort Hood, Virginia Tech.  
Too many to name.  
So many lives, no -  
So many worlds -  
cut short.  
My friends,  
let us  
Rise up with  
our feet,  
our hands, and  
our words.

### **Prayer for Peace**

By Rabbi Sara O'Donnell Adler

God of our mothers and fathers,  
God of tenderness,  
God of lovers, teachers and children,  
may we see the day when love conquers fear  
when compassion overrides judgment  
and the echo of gunshot is heard no more.  
Let a great peace wrap its arms around our country,  
and hold us tight.  
Unite us—people of all races, religions,  
orientations and identities  
in a bond of true fellowship.  
Teach us to respect difference  
and take pride in one another.  
Let us learn that diversity makes us stronger,  
that the healthiest forests are filled  
with a multitude of species and birdsong.  
God on High, let us find consolation  
and comfort under Your canopy of peace.  
May the memories of those assaulted by violence  
inspire us to mend our broken world.  
Let us grind guns into garden tools,  
bend our weapons into bridges.  
May we learn war no more.



## **Prayer for Peace**

Adapted from Prayer for Peace in Paris

By Rabbi Lev Meirowitz Nelson

May the One who blessed our ancestors  
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,  
Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah—  
The Merciful One who blessed the Hebrew midwives as they stood up against an evil decree  
and watched over baby Moses as he floated on the river—  
Bless and protect all those hurt and affected by gun violence.  
May God send calm and courage to all who are living in fear,  
healing and well-being to all who are injured,  
comfort to their families and communities,  
and good counsel to those acting for the public safety.  
May all those whose lives have been cut short be bound up in the Bond of Life;  
May peace fill the earth as water fills the sea,  
And may this be a season of Shalom around the world.  
*Oseh shalom bim'romav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu, ve'al kol Yisrael ve'al kol yoshvei tevel, ve'imru Amen.*

## **Today the World is Born: A Rosh haShannah Kavannah**

By Rabbi Menachem Creditor

God, we stand waiting for a world, this world, our world to be reborn. It's not a statement we make lightly; it is a statement of need. The world needs rebirthing. Our hearts need deep healing. Our lives need rebuilding after all the pointless deaths we've endured this past year.

Dear God, guns and violence have destroyed tens of thousands of lives in America this year. Tens of thousands. We call to you, Adonai, and beg that you stand in Din, in Judgment, of our carelessness and our callousness at the senseless, avoidable loss of many human lives. We call to you, Adonai, to infuse our souls with Chesed, Your Love, so that we really start to cry out from the pain our nation has endured for far too long.

May we be inspired by You and act to save many, many lives this coming year. We know that only then will we be worthy of a world reborn.



## **For the Too-Often Wounded:**

### **Closing benediction to Greater Washington DC Orlando Solidarity Event**

Rabbi Lauren Holtzblatt and Rabbi Aaron Alexander

1 - *Ribono shel Olam, Master of the world*, You, the holy one who taught us that righteousness, justice and kindness are not in heaven above, not across the sea, not far away, but very close to us--in our mouths, our hands, and in our hearts. Bless the people of this too-often wounded country with the ability to know their own best selves, to muster their strength in the world to heal, to transform, to lift up--so that all our precious communities will know unconditional love.

2 - *Ribono shel Shalom, Master of peace*, let us come to understand that peace is not only the absence of war or violence, but also the ability to live, to love, and to experience the fullness of what it means to be a human being. To live a life--without the constant fear of bullets, or bigotry, or bullying. A life—not tolerated, but celebrated, for its unqualified worthiness, be it in Orlando or Oakland, Chicago or Columbine, Northwest or Southeast. True peace demands we recognize that when any one of us is diminished, each of us suffers.

3 - *Ribono shel Bracha, Master of blessing*, may you rain upon us the energy to renew our hearts that are in despair. Help us see the power we have when we join together to help shape and co-create this world with you. Open our eyes to new paths to make change that we cannot see yet. Let us see each other as you created each one of us- with unique, holy differences that make this world beautiful and magical and singular in its magnificence.

4 - *Ribono shel Chesed, Master of Love*, may we leave here today with the courage, the energy, and the conviction to make this a kinder, more just world. Our thoughts and prayers are only as potent as our feet permit them to be. Let this moment of unity not be in vain--may it erase the indifference that permeates too much of our community and country, and may You, God, and Your eternal Torah, be the light and love that guides us on our journey.

## **We Remember Them**

By Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Riemer

At the rising sun and at its going down; we remember them.

At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter; we remember them.

At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring; we remember them.

At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer; we remember them.

At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of the autumn; we remember them.

At the beginning of the year and when it ends; we remember them.

As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength; we remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart; we remember them.

When we have decisions that are difficult to make; we remember them.

When we have joy we crave to share; we remember them.

When we have achievements that are based on theirs; we remember them.

For as long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as, we remember them.



## **Each of Us Has A Name**

By Zelda, translated by Marcia Lee Falk

Each of us has a name  
given by God  
and given by our parents  
Each of us has a name  
given by our stature and our smile  
and given by what we wear  
Each of us has a name  
given by the mountains  
and given by our walls  
Each of us has a name  
given by the stars  
and given by our neighbors  
Each of us has a name  
given by our sins

and given by our longing  
Each of us has a name  
given by our enemies  
and given by our love  
Each of us has a name  
given by our celebrations  
and given by our work  
Each of us has a name  
given by the seasons  
and given by our blindness  
Each of us has a name  
given by the sea  
and given by  
our death.

*From The Book of Blessings © 1996 Marcia Lee Falk.*

## **Merger Poem**

By Judy Chicago

And then all that has divided us will merge  
And then compassion will be wedded to power  
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind  
And then both men and women will be gentle  
And then both women and men will be strong  
And then no person will be subject to another's will  
And then all will be rich and free and varied  
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many  
And then all will share equally in the Earth's abundance  
And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the old  
And then all will nourish the young  
And then all will cherish life's creatures  
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again

*Copyright Judy Chicago, 1979.*



## **The Diameter of the Bomb**

By Yehuda Amichai; translated by Chana Bloch

The diameter of the bomb was thirty centimeters  
and the diameter of its effective range about seven meters,  
with four dead and eleven wounded.  
And around these, in a larger circle  
of pain and time, two hospitals are scattered  
and one graveyard. But the young woman  
who was buried in the city she came from,  
at a distance of more than a hundred kilometers,  
enlarges the circle considerably,  
and the solitary man mourning her death  
at the distant shores of a country far across the sea  
includes the entire world in the circle.  
And I won't even mention the howl of orphans  
that reaches up to the throne of God and  
beyond, making  
a circle with no end and no God.

\* \* \*

O Lord, we confess our sins, we are ashamed of the inadequacy of our anguish, of how faint and slight is our mercy. We are a generation that has lost its capacity for outrage. We must continue to remind ourselves that in a free society all are involved in what some are doing. Some are guilty, all are responsible.  
- Abraham Joshua Heschel, From "A Prayer for Peace" p. 231

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No sin is so light that it may be overlooked. No sin is so heavy that it may not be repented of.  
- Moses Ibn Ezra



## IV

### FLYER TEMPLATE

You can find the template on our website: [www.rabbisagainstgunviolence.org](http://www.rabbisagainstgunviolence.org)  
Go to the September 25 Toolkit and download it from there.





V

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

You can find the template on our website: www.rabbisagainstgunviolence.org
Go to the September 25 Toolkit and download it from there.

Two side-by-side panels showing a press release template. The left panel contains placeholder text for organization name, date, media contact, and event details. The right panel contains placeholder text for a description of the concert and information about Rabbis Against Gun Violence.



## VI

### SOME GUN VIOLENCE FACTS / RESOURCES

- \* Roughly 91 people are killed each day by guns. Of those, approximately 7 are children and teens. Approximately 33,000 people are killed each year by guns.
- \* Data from the National Crime Victimization Survey indicates that between 2010 and 2014, there were an estimated 43,000 hate crimes committed in the United States that involved guns.
- \* People on the terror watch lists legally purchased guns over 2,000 times over 11 years—because the FBI had no authority to block those sales.
- \* Young black men, particularly those in impoverished, dense urban areas, are especially at risk of gun violence. Constituting just 6% of the US population, black men account for more than 50% of all gun homicides each year. Firearm homicide is the leading cause of death for black males ages 15–34.
- \* Every 16 hours between 2006 and 2014, an American woman was fatally shot by a current or former romantic partner, totaling 544 deaths annually.
- \* In 2015, on average, a toddler in America shot someone once a week. Between 2007 and 2011, an average of 62 children age 14 and under died each year in reported unintentional shootings. But strong evidence shows that the actual count is a shocking 61% higher.
- \* Americans are 25 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than people in other developed countries.
- \* Over the past 5 years, more Americans have been murdered with guns than with all other weapons combined
- \* Suicides account for about 2/3 of all gun death in the U.S. People who live in homes with guns have three to five times the risk of dying by suicide compared to people who live in homes without guns. When a firearm is used in a suicide attempt, there's an 85 percent chance of it being successful, which makes it 42 times more effective than suicides by overdose or poisoning. According to the Department of Veteran Affairs about 22 veterans kill themselves each day and roughly 70% do so with a firearm. (If you can prolong the time between the often-impulsive decision to commit suicide and



access to a gun, you can greatly decrease the chance of the attempt. And, of those people who attempt suicide and survive, only about 10 percent end up dying from suicide. So, preventing the attempted suicides – in this case by limiting access to guns by keeping them unloaded, locked, or out of the house – can save lives.)

Sources:

<http://smartgunlaws.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Healing-Communities-in-Crisis-2.pdf>

<http://www.thetrace.org/2016/02/woman-shot-killed-frequency-domestic-violence/>

<http://www.thetrace.org/2015/12/gun-violence-stats-2015/>

[http://everytownresearch.org/reports/innocents\\_lost/](http://everytownresearch.org/reports/innocents_lost/)

<http://www.thetrace.org/2016/03/guns-suicide-risk-factor-harvard-study/>

<http://www.thetrace.org/2015/11/gun-suicides-mental-illness-statistics/>

Niraj Chokshi, “When Hate Crimes and Guns Mix: What Five Years of Federal Data Show,”

<http://wapo.st/1sCj2za>.

“Senators Introduce Bill to Stop terrorists from Buying Firearms, Explosives,” February 24, 2015, available at <http://1.usa.gov/1zIBli>

More information can be found here:

<https://www.thetrace.org/>

<http://smartgunlaws.org/>

<http://www.vpc.org/>

<http://everytown.org/learn/>

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/guns-crime/view/>