

Tikkun to heal, repair and transform the world



**A note from Rabbi Michael
Lerner**

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We at Tikkun reaffirm our commitment to the safety of and respect for the GLBTQ community.

"They" are "us"--we are both straight and gay and bi and trans, Jewish and Christian and Muslim and Buddhist and Hindu and earth-based religions of every variety, young and old, religious and secular humanists and atheists.

We will not let any sector of "us" get scared that the rest of us will abandon them. Just as I said at Muhammed Ali's funeral that Jews will stand with Muslims in the face of growing Islamophobia (all the more needed now that some politicians are trying to use the horror of mass murder of gays in Orlando by a supposedly Muslim young man to justify repression against Muslims), so we will not let gays become an "acceptable" target for the haters. Not gays, not anyone.

We are one global "we," and we must never let any part of us become the target that is somehow made a "legitimate" target.

But true solidarity needs to go beyond standing with the victims of hate crimes, homophobia, Islamophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, xenophobia and all the other variants of hatred. True solidarity should lead us to the imperative to develop strategies to heal the distortions and pains that lead people into communities of hate.

Our strategies must separate the hateful behavior from the pain in people that underlies their misdirected rage and sometimes violent actions. We must develop ways to speak to those deep psychic wounds and hurts and show people that

there are better and more effective strategies to deal with those pains than to act them out on others, whether that acting out be in the form of demeaning or raping or making war against others, or in the form of mass politics of hatred.

That's why in the Fall 2016 issue of Tikkun I'll develop a whole approach to understanding these movements of hate and demobilizing them. I'll lay out a strategy for an Empathy Tribe--not an empathy that brings us to an understanding that leads to passivity, but an empathy that can guide us to most effectively demobilize the hatred and redirect people's pains in ways that could actually help alleviate them.

Not for a moment will this empathy entail lessening our outrage or commitment to fight against and resist every form of demeaning some "other." And this is precisely what the interfaith and secular-humanist-and-atheist-welcoming Network of Spiritual Progressives takes as one of its major foci--training people to become outreach organizers for empathy that can, over time, disempower hate and disconnect the inner allies of anger that gets manipulated into hatred, but to do so without disempowering our righteous indignation and desire to resist all forms of "othering."

So you are invited to learn about our worldview and approach to healing at www.spiritualprogressives.org/covenant, and then join our Network of Spiritual Progressives at www.spiritualprogressives.org/join and become part of a movement dedicated to developing the strategy and powerful interventions that will empower our most loving and caring selves and help us learn how to liberate that part of others who on the surface look like they are "too far gone."

But right now, our grieving takes precedence over our strategizing. So as a rabbi, I pray for the speedy recovery of the survivors of the Orlando massacre, for healing for the families of those who suffered loss or have a loved one now fighting for his or her life, for the whole glbtq community who are once again faced with the possibility of being open targets, for Muslims who are unfairly being blamed for the actions of one murderer (though we never find the media and the right wingers blaming all whites when it is a white man who is the murderer), and for all Americans.

We pray that Americans will move quickly and decisively toward eliminating all those assault rifles and mini-machine guns in the form of automatic weapons, and we pray for an end to the demeaning of others that is often part of the causal chain that feeds the murderous impulses of a few mentally deranged people who act out their murderous fantasies.

Let the healing begin!

Blessings to all.

Rabbi Michael Lerner

The poem below, written in response to the massacre in Orlando, is a cry of grief that speaks for many of us.

Pulse

by Tom Emanuel

Place your hand just there on my heart can you feel it can you feel hot crimson
blood thump-thumping through me hot crimson blood vouchsafing to me the holy
knowledge that I am Alive here where lights are neon and audacious here where
my lover can kiss me without fear without hesitation

yes I know I am Alive here because I tell you I saw the best bodies of my
generation aglow on the dancefloor clutching liberation in one hand and ecstasy in
the other reaching for other bodies out of their minds because minds have become
prisons self-doubt and manic depression erected by well-meaning love-scared
family and friends and judgment-eyed parishioners

saw them holding each other defending each other against slurs against prayers
against stonewall cannonades breaching hulls breaching confidence wooden ships
on the water very free and easy and silver people on the shoreline won't you let
them be won't you let us Be

saw bodies drowning tamped down under pressure knee-deep in pools of dying
years stolen on streets of Castro and Greenwich and Chelsea and Boystown streets
slick with useless blood and derision because they're just a bunch of queers right

saw prayers offered four-on-the-floor and everybody form a line when they gunned
Harvey down blood on the streets blood on the streets when they billy-clubbed
Miss Major blood in the gutter blood in the gutter when they bound Matt to that
roadside cross blood in the fields blood in the fields but not here not where they
told us we'd be Safe

saw them reviled on street corners for Your sake O God called dirty fags by fifth-
graders who didn't even know what the word meant just knew it was the worst
epithet you could hurl at another human being called trannies monsters
abominations in courtroom halls gay panic defense families abandoned in tears and
judgment

saw them cavorting with David and Jonathan through the Temple scarred bodies
radiating Light breaking through the Ark into the Tabernacle because this is the
great tablet-stoned commandment to love kindness to do mercy to dance
unashamed with your God

saw them burning with angel-holy love on rooftops and cabaret stages and screens
silver and glittering Freddie fabulous unafraid making rent making love making
music to rescue us all from birdcages of our own design

saw them curled on couches watching Netflix hand in hand hanging from flagpoles
and balconies chanting *we're here we're queer get used to it* even when we refused
to listen running fingertips along toes and necks and lips face to face love to love
birthing Newness and Hope in gushing torrents of Glory

saw them riddled with bullets like politicians' teeth smiling and thumbs aloft
bullets like tears I cried when I learned I didn't have a little sister after all bullets
like pills falling through empty gunshot-wound holes in fragile hearts bullets like
hands laid on to pray the gay away

saw them strobe-lit and magnificent in death for nothing can take away the beauty
of living as God made you of loving as God made you of loving Who God Made
You

saw them all and went down to the spot between Fell Street and Oak where I feel
the backbeat of Eternity strongest in this world to be with the street people and the
freaks the ones who came here because they knew that they would be safe here to
dance and to cry and to howl We Can Be Together and I believe we can

and in reply I heard them singing *Love's such an old-fashioned word and Love
dares us to change our way of caring about ourselves yes this is our last dance this
is Ourselves under* but they did not finish the line because the pressure valves have
burst yes Time is now fulfilled yes the Kingdom is at hand blood on the dancefloor
blood on the dancefloor

and I placed my hand on my breast to feel my own healthy straight heart beat
seventy times per healthy straight minute reminding me I am here I am Alive
charging me to make every beat an act of penitence an appeal to God a blood-
rushing prayer that this pulse this pulse *this* pulse at least might not beat in vain—

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