

A Prayer for Victims of Gun Violence

Adapted from a reading authored by Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner

On the High Holidays, in the *Untaneh Tokef* climax of our service, we declare:

Let us declare the sacred power of this day;

It is awesome and full of dread.

Who shall live and who shall die?

Who in good time, and who by an untimely death...

Who shall be serene and who tormented...?

This much we know: In the United States today, we are all tormented.

We are tormented by our national failure to address the preventable scourge of gun violence.

We are tormented by the price of our failure, paid in blood; the blood of the men, women and children, whose lives are stolen every day and every night by perpetrators of senseless gun violence across America.

We are tormented by the unrelenting flow of firearms, pushed by the gun industry, flooding our communities and turning streets into rivers of blood.

In our torment, we cry out and ask our nation and especially, our lawmakers:

Who shall be bold and who shall hide? Who will say yes to common sense gun safety laws and no to weapons of war?

Who will say yes to background checks and no to easily available silencers? Who will protect our children and who will cower before the NRA? Who will help our nation heal and who will deepen our wounds?

Let us declare the sacred power of this day;

It is awesome and full of dread.