



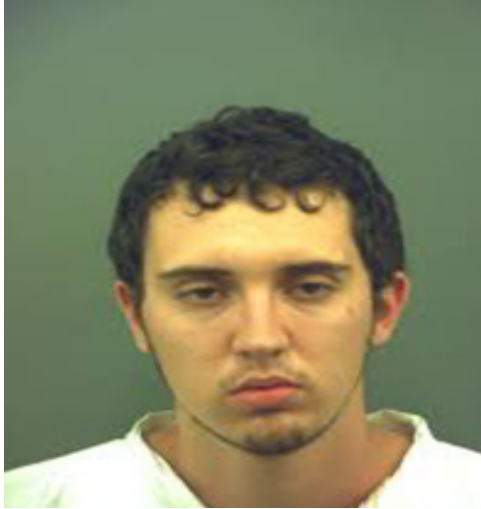
Synagogue Life in the Age of the Mass Killer

PART ONE

This weekend, Americans woke to the news of another mass shooting; a scenario that has become far too familiar. This time, the news was particularly gruesome, with two mass shootings occurring within hours of one another. By the end of the day, at least 31 people had been killed and several dozen injured. In these trying times synagogue security is a hot topic, and with good reason; the Tree of Life synagogue, Chabad of Poway synagogue, Hancock Park synagogue, and Young Israel of Greater Miami, were all

recently attacked, with 12 killed and eight injured, including an eight year old girl whose family, seeking safety and normalcy, recently moved to America. As horrific as that is, it's paralleled by the shootings at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston South Carolina, where 9 worshipers were killed and three injured. However, both incidences pale the shootings in Christchurch New Zealand, where attacks on two mosques resulted in 51 deaths, including several children and 49 injuries. This is not about who has suffered more, it's not about who rightfully gets to carry the victims mantle, it's not about race, religion or

ideology; this is about a basic reverence for the sanctity of human life.



Accused El Paso shooter, Patrick Crusius

While we all naturally hope for the best, we must plan for the worse. According to war historian, Carl Von Clausewitz, one must prepare for an adversary's capabilities, not, their intentions. Synagogue security doesn't necessarily need to be on the front line; but, should always be in the back of our minds. Synagogues are mostly welcoming houses of worship that opens its arms and doors to all who seek to come; therefore, it is inconceivable that a synagogue's doors should be locked during religious services. Such an action would restrict access to the congregation, deter visitors and undermine the communal religious experience the synagogue seeks to engender; however, new realities dictate that we rethink synagogue security.

Notwithstanding some of the reckless and

irresponsible rhetoric coming from the current administration, perceived government sanctioned anti-Semitic and racist sentiments are not the biggest threat to our safety and peace of mind. The lone wolf is currently a much larger and more odious threat to our safety and way of life than 'organized' terror groups. The lone wolf, that grandiose, egocentric personal cause killer with a god complex; or perhaps he's that lonely, pathetic individual who desperately seeks to finally escape his perceived invisibility and has determined that the best chance to be seen, is in taking the life of a perfect stranger. As if that isn't tragic enough, the plan is never to take a single life; but, to take as many as possible. The shooter adopts a sick distortion of the old adage, the more the merrier. If, by the way, you are concerned that I'm not using gender neutral terminology; it's appropriate, considering mass shooters are overwhelmingly male.

As Mark Twain once quipped, the greatest fencer in the world does not fear the second greatest fencer in the world; but might fear the worst – that is the lone wolf.

Congregation Ahavas Sholom

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The biggest obstacle in dealing with the lone wolf is their unpredictability. It's nearly impossible to establish a pattern of behavior for someone who doesn't

particularly have one. While most mass murderers

harbor a great

deal of hate,

no one knows beforehand

how that hate

will manifest

itself, which

people might

be targeted,

or where he

might strike.

Accused El

Paso shooter,

Patrick Cru-

sus, reportedly drove 11 to 12 hours to

reach El Paso, where the shootings occurred.

Dylann Roof traveled two hours to unleash

his rage on the

congregation of the Emanuel African

Methodist Episcopal Church.

Conservative political leaders and gun rights

advocates continue to blame this recent wave

of gun violence on everything except

America's ongoing fascination with guns

and an endless stream of the profit-driven

manufacture of weaponry that is unique to

the United States. The internet, social media,

video games, screens (large and small) have

all at some point, been scapegoated as the root cause of the gun violence in our country. When a mass shooting occurs; after circling the wagons, gun advocates are quick to blame the shooter's actions on their mental capacity. Using deflective

words like sick, mental, and psychotic to make their case;

America's proliferation of

guns is never the problem,

never the issue, and never up

for debate. After the El Paso

shooting, President Trump

stated, "Mental illness pulls

the trigger not the gun;"

however statistics show

America's rate of mental

illness is not appreciably

higher than any other de-

veloped country; yet, there

are more mass shootings in

the United States than in any other country

in the world. In fact, according to a 2017

CNN report; between 1966 and 2012 there

were more mass shootings in America than

in the next four countries on the list —com-

bined.

Even this fails to address that stubborn

little detail that most mentally ill persons

are not violent, nor does it explain away

the multitude of studies that confirm most

mass killers are not insane. According to

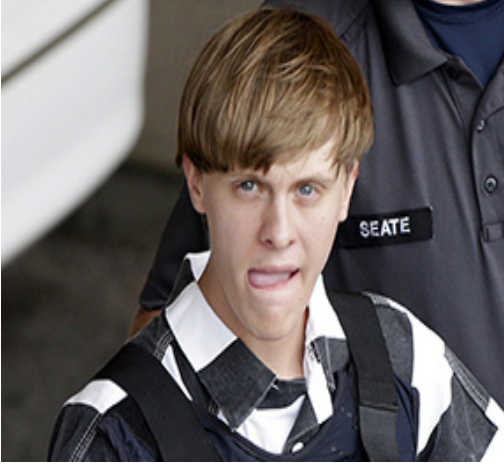
Kevin Cameron, executive director of the

Canadian Center for Threat Assessment

and Trauma, "In almost all high-end mass

*There are more mass
shootings in the
United States than in any
other country in the world.*

killings, the perpetrator's thinking evolves." Cameron went on to explain the mass killer's



Dylann Roof was convicted of murdering 9 people

thought process, "They have a passing thought. They think about it more, they fantasize, they slowly build a justification. They prepare, and then when the right set of circumstances comes along, it unleashes the rage." If the shooter has enough awareness to rationalize their actions, they're most likely sane. They might be sick individuals, they might suffer from some level of mental disorder; but, clinically, they're not mentally ill. They're reasoning may be skewed; but, they know exactly what they're doing. They're not mentally incompetent madmen; running around in aluminum foil hats and shooting at imaginary beings from another planet. They're shooting fellow humans; not only do they know it – they relish in it. While I don't think I should have

to point this out, I am not advocating the confiscation of anyone's weapon; however, I do believe there should be some type of control over the type of weapons manufactured in this country and the process for acquiring them. When gun lobbyists and gun rights advocates evoke the second amendment; it's not about rights, it's money; it's always about money. ☆

Part two of this article will appear next week.



Fred and Linda Grabiner have a 10 x 12 sukkah they're looking to dispose of; interested parties should contact Rabbi Rosenbach at 908-591-4037

Simon Says

Weekly insights from Rabbi Simon Rosebach



Rabbi Simon Rosenbach

Last Shabbat, a day of rest and peace, a mass murderer killed (at last count) 22 people and injured many more at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas. The next day, the Sabbath of the Christian world, a mass murderer killed nine people in Dayton, Ohio.

El Paso is situated on the Rio Grande, paired with Ciudad Juarez across the border. Mexicans and Americans freely cross the border to work, shop, dine, and

recreate in each other's cities. The shooter, whose name is Patrick Crusius, is 21 years old and a bigot, who believes Hispanics are invading the United States and posted a manifesto on line to that effect.

Perpetrators of mass shootings in the last decades have many motivations. Some of them have been inspired by bigotry, and some of them have mental illness as the cause. But all of them have one thing in common: semi-automatic weapons.

Bigots can not kill so many people with knives. Mentally ill people can not kill so many people with knives. But anybody can kill 50 people in under two minutes using a semi-automatic rifle and an ammunition magazine that holds 30 rounds. (Even in New Jersey, an assault weapon bought before 1990 is legal, and even in New Jersey an ammunition magazine can legally hold 10 rounds. So a person who owns a legal weapon can kill 10-20 people in under two minutes.)

After a mass shooting, clergymen pray for the victims and their families. I am tired of praying. I am in an interfaith group in Newark, and the leader of the group asked me to offer a prayer after the Parkland shooting. I said,

I am unaccustomed to quoting the New Testament, but render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, and render unto God that which is God's. [If you must know, it is Matthew 22:21.] Prayer is fine, but money

talks. If one million contribute \$50 each to Michael Bloomberg's organization, Everytown for Gun Safety, the organization will have \$50,000,000 to contribute to candidates who promote sane gun laws. If ten million contribute \$50 each, Everytown would have \$500,000,000 million to contribute to candidates who promote sane gun laws. That amount will give the NRA a run for its money.

I have been invited to offer a prayer twice since, and I always say the same thing. We need to defeat the congressmen and senators, and state representatives and senators who thwart the passage of sane gun laws. By sane gun laws I mean universal background checks (which a majority of the country supports) and a ban of assault-style rifles. (A federal ban on assault rifles was enacted in 1994, and by its terms it lasted 10 years. It expired in 2004, and it has not been renewed.) By sane gun laws I mean keeping any firearm out of the hands of a person who has been adjudged a committer of domestic violence. By sane gun laws I mean making manufacture smart firearms, and by sane gun laws I mean treating firearms like automobiles: a firearms class and insurance. Walter Cronkite effectively ended the Viet Nam War (although it took another four years to end the war) in February of 1968, when he said on his broadcast, "[I]t seems now more

certain than ever that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate. . . . [I]t is increasingly clear to this reporter that the only rational way out then will be to negotiate, not as victors, but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy, and did the best they could. This is Walter Cronkite. Good night."

Lester Holt is the Walter Cronkite of today. I wish one night, rather than reporting the latest mass

shooting, Lester Holt would say, "Enough is enough. It is past time that Congress enacted universal background checks, a ban on assault weapons, a ban on firearms in the hands of persons who commit acts of domestic violence, mandatory safety classes, mandatory smart firearms, and mandatory insurance."

Lester Holt has an audience in the millions, I have an audience numbered 250. But if Lester Holt will not say it, I will beat the drum every time I get the opportunity. Maybe some influential person will see or hear my words, and will be able to effect actual change. ☆

Motivations may differ; but, all mass shooters have one thing in common: semi-automatic weapons.

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It's been estimated it will take \$60, 000 to properly renovate our kitchen.

April Modlinger, who has always been a pillar at Congregation Ahavas Sholom, has generously pledged \$10, 000 to making this happen.

We have recently received another pledge for \$2,200, bringing the total to 12, 200.

With your help Congregation Ahavas Sholom will soon have a kitchen we all deserve.

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We would like to thank and recognize those who gave so generously to support Congregation Ahavas

Sholom in its various efforts to foster Tikun Olam

Rabbi Simon and Gayle Rosenbach - *The Ronald and Joan David Foundation*

Irene Cooper-Busch-*Namutumba Famine Relief Fund*

Elisa Sananman-*Namutumba Famine Relief Fund*

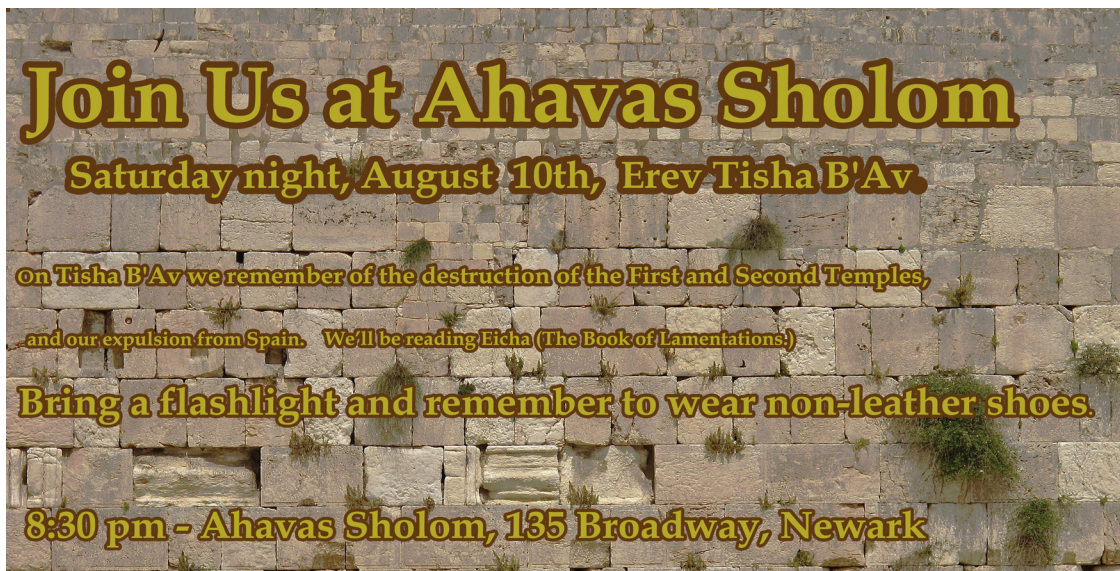
Linda Bloom
Elena Smith
Dubra Shenker

Latino Jewish Leadership Council condemns the violence in El Paso and Dayton Ohio

In the wake of last week's massacres, The Latino Jewish Leadership Council (LJLC) issued the following statement: The members of the Latino Jewish Leadership Council (LJLC) are deeply saddened by the senseless and horrific mass shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, which resulted in 31 deaths and dozens of injured. Regarding El Paso in particular, we strongly denounce the rise of anti-Latino/anti-immigrant hate in our public sphere. This hate, coupled with unbridled access to assault weapons allowing for domestic terrorism, fueled the El Paso massacre. We also express our solidarity with Mexico for the loss of life of several of its citizens. At this critical juncture, Americans expect

moral clarity from their leaders. Words and actions are absolutely required to bring the nation together, heal wounds, and prevent individuals supporting xenophobic and racist positions from further terrorizing our communities. Changes to our gun laws are also urgently required and cannot wait any longer.

We call upon our elected and appointed officials, Republicans and Democrats alike, indeed all people of good will, to stand together, with absolute moral clarity, for American democratic and pluralistic core values, which remain the bedrock of our nation and the best defense against the forces of hatred that seek to appeal to prejudice and to divide us. ✡



Kiddush Sponsorship

Last week's Kiddush was sponsored by Miriam (Marianne) Moy in honor of her beloved husband, Russell Moy; this week's Kiddush is being sponsored by Dorris Spector, and next week's Kiddush (8/17) will be sponsored by Joan & Allan Podnos. Kiddush is \$150, which barely covers the cost of the lunch. Our goal is to have every Kiddush sponsored. To sponsor a Kiddush, email Rabbi Rosenbach or contact Alla Eicheldinger at Alla7815@yahoo.com. You can also help us by shopping, which doesn't cost any money, just a little time. We'll give you a list of items, you shop and we'll reimburse you. Whatever you can do will be appreciated, greatly.

Shabbat Services

Join us this Saturday for Shabbat services. Strangers, visitors, friends, old and new; our doors are open to you. Looking for a new home? New members are always welcome at Congregation Ahavas Sholom services starts at 9:00AM. Our congregation is open and welcoming, so feel free to pay us a visit.



Our Sister Synagogue in Uganda Needs Our Help

Ravaged by famine and drought, the Namutumba Synagogue is reaching out to us; let's not disappoint them.

The Namutumba Famine Relief Fund

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