

Weekly Teaching

December 30, 2016

2016 has been a challenging year for us as both Americans and Jews.

There continues to be tensions that confront us: the uncertainty in Israel, the global rise of anti-Semitism, the war against terror, the economy, etc.

We live in uncertain times, and yet the Jewish people are historically familiar with confronting uncertainty.

Throughout history, we have confronted the curses that come with life, and we have still always found the strength to pursue and celebrate life.

Our ancestors understood that one way to accomplish the mitzvah of “choosing life” is by accessing the power of prayer.

According to rabbinic tradition, when we pray, we are creating the spiritual bridge between earth and heaven.

Our prayers express our faith, and our insistence that we will not give in to the fears that confront us.

Because of our faith, we are able to remind ourselves that God has faith in us as well.

Our prayerful words remind us that we are God’s partners in all of Creation.

We pray because we ask God to give us the strength to be the best we can be, and for God to help give us an extra divine nudge in the right direction.

All of Jewish history is the story of how God acts through the human beings who had faith in Him.

Our prayers are a collective cue to resume the living of the sacred Jewish historical narrative.

With our new secular New Year, may our prayers take on a special intensity and depth.

May God listen to our prayers; for us and our families, for the Jewish people and our fellow Americans, and for all of humanity.

May this New Year grant us all health, fulfillment, blessings and peace.

Happy Chanukah and a Happy, Healthy & Peaceful New Year!

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