

**Orlando Horror**

**Shavuot** is the holiday that celebrates the giving, and receiving,  
of the Ten Commandments, the Jewish people's great gift to the world.  
One of them is *Lo Tirtzach*—You shall not murder.

The holiday began on Saturday evening.

Later that same night, as we know,  
the commandment was horrifically violated.

Whatever it is that separates us, on this we can agree:

Murder is as foul a crime as we, created in God's image, can commit.

Actually there is a crime worse than murder—and that is mass murder.

Last month, I served as a leader on an educational mission  
to a number of death camps in Eastern Europe.

Which brought mass murder to a level not seen before or since.

But the crimes of the Holocaust and the crime at Pulse were brothers—  
each the offspring of twisted ideology and hate.

On the trip I asked our students, HS seniors, to contemplate three questions:

- 1) How could people do this?
- 2) How could people allow this to be done?
- 3) What does it all tell us about God?

I didn't expect complete answers. Frankly, I'm not sure that any exist.

But we can search. And we can wrestle.

Those questions are appropriate if we are studying the 1930's-40's  
and they are appropriate today.

Tonight we'll set aside Questions 1 & 3.

To understand how people could do this,  
we would have to live inside their heads;  
and that is something none of us want to do.

To understand what it tells us about God  
would require a lifetime's worth of nights.

But "How can people allow this to be done?" THIS we can address.

We know that we are deeply flawed vessels.

We know that murder has plagued the human race since Cain and Abel.

But we believe, nay we insist, that we are better than this.

We can be better than this. We **MUST** be better than this.

If we can not, if we are not, then heaven help us—

And friends, "Heaven help us" is not an acceptable response to mass murder.

"Heaven help us" is not what heaven needs to hear.

"How can we help heaven?" is the question for the day.

I wish I could tell you I have the whole solution. I don't.  
But I do have faith that one is possible.  
We too can search and wrestle. We can find a better way.  
There is always a better way than hate.

My prayer is that this time our actions will be more than the sum  
of our "words, thoughts and prayers."  
For our own sake. For God's sake.

Thank you and *shalom*.