

FROM THE RABBI
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'Yotzer or u'vorey choshech, Oseh shalom, u'vorey et hakol' – 'Former of Light and Creator of Darkness, Maker of Peace, Creator of All'. This line, from the morning liturgy, never ceases to impress me every time we recite it. Originating from the Book of Isaiah (45:7), it is a bold charge to hold the paradoxical complexities of life in our hearts and hands. The Jewish tradition is very good at doing that: the 'lachma anya' of the Passover Seder is both the 'bread of affliction' and the center piece of our Feast of Freedom. During Chanukkah and Purim, we both commemorate our people's subjugation to possible genocide as well as our resilience in overcoming that evil. And the 'Yoms', as we call them – the period where we celebrate Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Day), Yom haZikaron (Jewish Memorial Day) and Yom ha'Atzma'ut – are not just important to those of us with strong connections to Israel, but to all of us who embrace this blessed paradox of Jewish resilience and

I personally have been feeling this keenly myself this past week in the wake of the Poway Synagogue Shooting. As I prepared to take my family out for a well-deserved post-Pesach pizza dinner, I saw the news. As I wrote in my earlier letter to the congregation, it is very normal for so many of us to experience a range of feelings as we process this news over the coming period. We can take solace in the wisdom of the Jewish tradition and in the power of community: both our immediate Jewish community here in the area as well as the wider Iowa City community. I have been touched by the messages of support the synagogue has received from our Christian and Muslim friends. Meanwhile, we can rely on the connection and company of each other as we move deeper into Spring and Summer.

We can both look back on the blessings we've experienced over the last period as well as what is still to come. The Pesach period was a sweet time