

October 3, 2017

Las Vegas—Are Thoughts & Prayers Enough?

Friends,

Yesterday, we awoke to our nation's deadliest mass shooting in recent history. Again, our elected representatives—and scores of everyday Americans—joined the nation in grief, sharing their “thoughts and prayers” for the victims and their families. These words of comfort come from a sense of solidarity, shock, and horror. For many, they also often come from faith. **It is therefore incumbent upon us to ask ourselves whether our heartfelt expressions are all that are required of us.**

Our nation's “thoughts and prayers” have been with too many victims, friends, and loved ones from Sandy Hook, Orlando, San Bernardino and now Las Vegas. It is sad but true that we remember and pray for the nearly 13,000 Americans killed each year by a gun. Sending thoughts and prayers is an act of solidarity. But without transformative change in our willingness to prevent these national tragedies, we will continue to witness unacceptable levels of violence and death.

Just as our great faiths and traditions urge us to pray for victims and survivors, they also urge us to act. **So, what is one simple and practical step that each of us can take to make our response to THIS tragedy different from ones before?** Those of us who believe can review what our sacred texts ask of us—and decide if words alone are enough.

After tragedies we must come together and mourn. We must help those victimized to heal. And we must work to create the change that stops this from happening. Otherwise, we risk becoming part of the problem.

See below what some of the world's great traditions have to say...



Joyce S. Dubensky
CEO

BAHÁ'Í

Let deeds, not words, be your adorning. *Bahá u'lláh, Hidden Words Persian 5*

BUDDHISM

Whoever, by a good deed, covers the evil done, such a one illumines this world like the moon freed from clouds. *Dhammapada 173*

CHRISTIANITY

What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. *James 2:14-21*

HINDUISM

The wise see knowledge and action as one; they see truly. *Bhagavad Gita 5.4, 5*

ISLAM

Whoever among you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand; if he cannot, then with his tongue; and if he cannot, then with his heart, and that is the weakest of faith." Narrated in *Shaih Muslim*.

JUDAISM

I call heaven and earth to witness: whether Jew or Gentile, whether man or woman, whether servant or freeman, they are all equal in this: that the Holy Spirit rests upon them in accordance with their deeds! *Midrash, Seder Eliyahu Rabbah 10*

SIKHISM

By their deeds and their actions, they shall be judged. God Himself is True, and True is His Court. *Guru Granth Sahib (34)*

NATIVE AMERICAN

It is no longer good enough to cry peace, we must act peace, live peace and live in peace. *Shenandoah*

ZOROASTRIANISM

A thousand people cannot convince one by words to the extent that one person can convince a thousand by action. *Denkard 6.31*