

In Anxiety and Solidarity, For Understanding

March 7, 2011, is the beginning of a new month in the Jewish calendar. The new moon, with its slim light, is traditionally understood as a time of some anxiety and of hope. Prayers recited just prior to the new moon ask that the new month bring increase in a variety of areas. “At the New Moon” (attached here) is adapted from these prayers and asks specifically for increased understanding across communities.

All faith communities are invited to use this prayer – adapting it further, as suits individual or congregational circumstances – in standing shoulder to shoulder with fellow citizens of all faiths and philosophies.

[Also on March 7, an official body of the United States government plans hearings that will isolate members of one faith as potential enemies of the nation. This is a time of anxiety. It's a delicate moment for our country, not only for those targeted.

The words of Pastor Martin Niemöller (1892–1984) --

“They came for [the others], and I did not speak out because I was not [an other]....

Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak out for me.”

-- still ring out from the past century. But a history-inspired self-interest is only one reason we must not let one community stand alone today. We must seek unity across difference at this precarious time for our nation.]

--Virginia Avniel Spatz, “A Song Every Day”

<http://songeveryday.wordpress.com>

At the New Moon, In Solidarity, For Understanding

Oh God, our God and God of our ancestors,
everything we accomplish is but a reflection of Your gifts to us, much as the moon only reflects the light of the sun.
At the new moon, only the barest sliver of moon is visible to us, and there is much we cannot see. Today, too, from our separate communities, we see but a sliver of the whole.
There is much we cannot see.

As the moon waxes, so too may our understanding of the wider world of faith and thought, particularly, those with whom we differ.

Renew our lives, we pray,
for a life of peaceful co-existence in our belief variety;
for a life of goodness,

enriched by a widening sense of community;
of blessing; of sustenance; of health;
marked by piety and fear of sin, as we recognize
the image of God in each individual;
free from shame and reproach, as we renew our efforts
to guard our tongues and our thoughts;
of abundance with honor;
filled with love of Your word, in all its facets,
and reverence for You,
in which the worthy desires of our hearts
will be fulfilled for good.

May the One who has done wonderful things for our ancestors, who redeemed them from slavery to freedom, bring us from the narrow confines of our own philosophies and practices to a wider understanding and love for our people, scattered to the four corners of the world. Bring us together toward a world united, for life, rejoicing, happiness, salvation and consolation. And let us say: AMEN.