this new year our focus

00:04

is on the mitzvah of tikkun olam

00:06

repairing

00:08

our broken world and our world

00:12

is broken it's ripped apart

00:17

by hatred divisiveness

00:21

and violence people are

00:24

suffering and we can help and believe it

00:28

or not the biggest

00:29

threat is our indifference

00:33

let's turn indifference to

00:36

making a difference

00:40

picture these individuals in your mind's

00:43

eye

00:43

real people like you and me and people

00:45

we're close to

00:48

picture a dentist who volunteers at free

00:51

clinics

00:52

a doctor who cares for terminally ill

00:55

patients

00:57

a volunteer who coaches a local youth

01:00

league

01:01

siblings who look out for one another

01:05

an elder who is vivacious and

01:07

enthusiastic

01:08

about living sound familiar

01:13

it could be a description of one of us a

01:15

relative or a

01:16

close friend only two short years ago on

01:20

october 27

01:22

2018 these individuals were among 11

01:27

people

01:27

brutally butchered in pittsburgh because

01:30

they were jewish

01:32

and at shabbat services at the tree of

01:34

life synagogue

01:37

the shocking incident stopped us in our

01:39

tracks

01:41

eleven jews were murdered six

01:44

more were seriously injured

01:47

we held a memorial service at our temple

01:50

the evening of that tragedy

01:52

over a thousand people gathered jews and

01:55

non-jews mourning

01:58

the tragedy together over 20

02:01

of my non-jewish clergy colleagues

02:03

joined me in leading prayers from this

02:05

bema

02:06

we sat in communal shiva

02:10

we felt connected in our pain

02:15

amidst the terrible darkness of this

02:17

senseless hatred against

02:18

jews we felt the support

02:22

of compassionate non-jews their support

02:25

gave us strength

02:27

and resilience their support made us

02:30

feel

02:31

understood and valued

02:36

there are more real people

02:39

out there more people just like us

02:43

and the people we love picture these

02:46

individuals

02:48

a dedicated community activist

02:51

a speech therapist a graduate student

02:56

a teacher a loving mother

02:59

a doting grandfather an active member of

03:03

a sisterhood

03:04

a hard working father

03:08

they were also real people who lost

03:10

their lives because of

03:12

senseless prejudice they lived in

03:15

charleston north carolina

03:18

and they too were butchered in their

03:20

house of worship

03:22

in june 2015 nine human beings were

03:25

murdered in the fellowship hall

03:27

of the emmanuel ame church

03:30

they were shot by a different gunman

03:34

this time a racist intent on killing

03:36

them because they were black

03:39

both shootings had the same evil

03:42

intention excuse me

03:44

a massacre at a synagogue a massacre

03:48

at a church a massacre of jews

03:52

a massacre of black people

03:56

all people just like us

04:00

when we discuss anti-semitism or racism

04:04

it can't be an abstract discussion

04:08

real people like us are the victims

04:12

this is not a political issue

04:17

judaism doesn't sanctify anyone's

04:20

party affiliations good people may

04:23

disagree on how to solve problems of

04:26

bias and prejudice

04:28

but good people acknowledge when real

04:31

problems

04:32

exist we don't put our head

04:35

in the sand we take action

04:42

who are the monsters able to carry out

04:44

horrible crimes

04:46

against people like us how do we

04:50

recognize them

04:52

in 1963 hannah aaron wrote a book

04:55

eichmann in jerusalem you may recall the

04:59

interesting

05:00

subtitle the banality of evil

05:05

arndt identified a distinct new kind

05:09

of evil doer adolf eichmann was a

05:12

leading official in nazi germany's ss

05:15

a main player in implementing the final

05:18

solution

05:19

eichmann didn't look like an easy to

05:21

identify monster

05:23

he lived a normal family life

05:26

in argentina until 1960 this family life

05:31

calm relaxed normal integrated his

05:34

community

05:36

until israeli agents finally captured

05:38

him

05:40

and then at his trial in 1961 eichmann

05:43

was accused of crimes against the jewish

05:45

people

05:46

against humanity arendt

05:50

didn't describe eichmann as a blood

05:52

thirsty criminal

05:55

she described him as a thoughtless

05:57

bureaucrat

05:59

passionate only in his desire to please

06:02

his superiors

06:03

a non-thinking functionary capable of

06:07

horrendous

06:08

evil this new concept the banality of

06:12

evil the idea that evil can be

06:14

ordinary commonplace and thoughtless

06:18

was entirely new until then theologians

06:22

and philosophers believe that evil deeds

06:24

are spurred by

06:25

passion hatred envy pride

06:28

or ambition aren't pointed out that

06:32

during the holocaust evil emanated not

06:34

only from a person with a gun

06:38

but also from people who were apathetic

06:42

people who upheld the systems and the

06:44

structures

06:46

which enable evil arendt affirmed that

06:50

evil grows

06:51

less out of our dark passions and more

06:54

from

06:55

indifference apathy and silence

07:00

consider for a moment the showa the

07:02

holocaust

07:04

most germans never killed a jew

07:07

themselves

07:09

most germans never shattered a window on

07:12

kristallnacht

07:14

most germans didn't turn their neighbors

07:16

over to the gestapo

07:18

in fact most germans never joined

07:22

the nazi party indifference

07:27

is what allowed the holocaust to occur

07:31

rather than get involved the german

07:32

people stayed silent

07:34

apathetic and indifferent

07:39

the majority of germans looked the other

07:41

way

07:42

and did nothing

07:46

in 1999 ellie wiesel the holocaust

07:49

survivor winner of the noble peace prize

07:51

the presidential medal of freedom

07:54

was invited to come and speak at the

07:56

white house

07:58

he told his personal story of the summer

08:01

of 1944 when as a teenager in hungary he

08:04

his father mother and sisters were

08:07

deported by the nazis to auschwitz

08:10

when they arrived ellie and his father

08:12

were selected by ss dr

08:13

joseph mendela to do slave labor

08:17

and the rest of his family were

08:18

immediately murdered

08:20

in the gas chambers ellie and his

08:23

father's daily life at auschwitz

08:25

included

08:26

starvation brutality the constant

08:29

struggle against

08:30

overwhelming despair in january 1945 as

08:34

the russian army drew near

08:36

ellie and his father were hardly taken

08:38

on what's now called

08:39

the death march they were forced to

08:42

march with other surviving prisoners

08:45

long distance in the bitter cold with

08:48

little or no

08:49

food water or rest

08:52

those who couldn't keep up were shot

08:55

about one in four died on the way from

08:57

auschwitz

08:58

to buchenwald and there ellie's father

09:02

would ultimately die right before the

09:04

end

09:04

of the war

09:08

when ellie was finally liberated by

09:10

american troops

09:13

we know his story he moved to paris he

09:15

became a journalist later he settled in

09:18

new york he wrote

09:20

40 books harrowing chronicles of his

09:23

holocaust experience

09:26

but in 1999 when he was at the white

09:29

house he began his

09:30

talk not about his personal story

09:36

instead he opened his remarks with the

09:38

question

09:40

what is indifference

09:44

he then explained that etymologically

09:46

the word

09:47

indifference means seeing or making

09:51

no difference then he defined

09:55

indifference as

09:56

the state in which the lines blur

09:59

between

10:00

crime and punishment cruelty and

10:03

compassion

10:04

good and evil

10:08

wiesel admitted that indifference can be

10:11

tempting

10:11

even more than that he said indifference

10:15

can be seductive when we are indifferent

10:18

it's

10:19

easier to look away than to engage

10:23

indifference elicits no response to be

10:26

indifferent to suffering

10:29

is what wiesel says we makes we

10:32

humans inhuman

10:37

wiesel acknowledged the heroes of the

10:40

holocaust

10:41

the heroes were not indifferent

10:46

the heroes stood staunchly against evil

10:49

the heroes did everything they could

10:52

to save jews the heroes made

10:56

a difference but then he asked

11:00

the white house why were there so

11:04

few supporters of jews

11:08

why was there a greater effort to save

11:11

ss

11:11

murderers after the war than to save

11:15

their victims

11:16

during the war why did some of america's

11:19

largest corporations continue to do

11:22

business with hitler's germany

11:24

until 1942 wiesel

11:28

added that for the person who is

11:31

indifferent

11:32

his or her neighbor are of no

11:35

consequence their lives are meaningless

11:40

their anguish is of no interest

11:43

indifference reduces the suffering of

11:46

another

11:47

to an abstraction

11:51

wiesel reminds us how few stood with us

11:55

and with others who were targeted by the

11:58

nazis

12:00

most people were indifferent and did

12:03

nothing

12:05

because it wasn't their problem because

12:08

it matched their own prejudices

12:11

because they didn't want to risk their

12:13

standing in society

12:16

because they were afraid or even because

12:20

they opposed the nazis

12:23

but weren't willing to get involved

12:29

we're not living in nazi germany or

12:31

anything like it but we do

12:32

live in a country with problems some of

12:36

these problems

12:37

victimize all of us equally but some

12:40

problems target

12:41

specific groups anti-semitism

12:44

targets us we have to combat hatred

12:48

against jews aggressively whenever

12:51

and wherever it arises we can't be

12:54

indifferent

12:55

to anti-semitism but we also need to be

12:59

alert

13:00

when prejudice assaults others and let's

13:03

have a clear definition

13:05

prejudice is when someone is in favor of

13:08

or against

13:09

one thing person or group compared

13:12

with another race color

13:16

religion national origin ethnicity

13:20

gender disability or sexual orientation

13:24

prejudice against any person

13:28

is a violation of god's will

13:32

we must confront our preconceived

13:34

negative judgments about a person

13:36

or a group of people

13:40

when we watch that video of george floyd

13:46

we must make sure

13:49

that we weren't indifferent

13:53

judaism teaches us over and over again

13:56

every human being is created in the

13:58

image of god

13:59

every human being is created equal love

14:02

your neighbor as yourself

14:04

speak up for those who can't speak for

14:06

themselves defend the weak and the

14:08

fatherless the torah tells us

14:09

uphold the cause of the poor and the

14:11

oppressed show mercy

14:13

and compassion to everyone

14:18

when there are prejudicial acts against

14:20

others it's not just the victim's

14:22

problem it's

14:23

everyone's problem anti-semitism is our

14:27

problem

14:27

it's the world's problem too

14:31

and when the second massacre occurred at

14:33

the tree of life synagogue in pittsburgh

14:36

we need to know that members of the

14:38

emmanuel ame

14:39

church traveled from charleston north

14:41

carolina

14:43

to lend their emotional support to show

14:45

solidarity in pittsburgh

14:47

paulie shepherd paulie was a survivor

14:51

of the first shooting at the emmanuel

14:53

amy church

14:55

she went to pittsburgh she shared hugs

14:58

and tears

14:59

with carol black carol black who

15:02

survived

15:03

the pittsburgh synagogue shooting

15:06

polly held carol's hand as carol

15:10

described

15:11

hiding in a closet while the gunman

15:14

murdered

15:14

her 65 year old brother

15:19

paulie had a connection to carol's

15:22

brother who had been murdered

15:25

because she had met his wife beth

15:28

when beth had organized a trip to

15:31

emmanuel church

15:32

to support paulie's community after that

15:36

tragic massacre

15:39

paulie spoke to the gathering of

15:41

survivors at both the church

15:44

the survivors from the church the

15:45

survivors at the synagogue

15:47

she spoke and she shared these words

15:52

it's sad and troubling

15:56

that in the united states of america

15:58

jews and

15:59

african-americans are united by having

16:02

been slaughtered

16:04

in their houses of worship we share many

16:08

bonds but it's unfortunate that this is

16:11

one of them

16:14

paulie's reverend then said right

16:16

afterwards from the depths of our hearts

16:19

we say you are not alone

16:23

we are here for you

16:30

covet 19 dominates our lives but there

16:32

are

16:33

other big problems to address as a

16:35

community

16:36

the bible tells us we are our brother's

16:39

keeper

16:40

saying nothing doing nothing in the face

16:43

of senseless violence doesn't make us

16:45

neutral it makes us guilty

16:50

when i was in seminary my teacher rabbi

16:53

lebo

16:54

often reminded us that the job of the

16:56

rabbi is to

16:57

comfort the disturbed and to disturb

17:01

the comfortable and it's time

17:05

to be uncomfortable it's time

17:08

for action not being prejudiced

17:12

not being racist isn't enough

17:16

as a temple community we joined stephen

17:19

and adrian reedy

17:21

when they led a three-part dialogue

17:24

called moving from

17:25

racism to racism

17:29

as a local biracial couple they shared

17:32

painful

17:33

personal experiences with us

17:36

those of us who listened validated their

17:39

feelings

17:40

even while solutions to the problem

17:44

are up for debate stephen and adrian

17:48

asked four things of us look

17:51

listen lament

17:55

learn we have to be willing to look

18:00

to open our eyes and acknowledge that a

18:03

problem

18:04

exists we have to be willing to listen

18:09

to consider views different from our own

18:14

we have to be willing to lament

18:17

to feel empathy for victims

18:22

and we have to be willing to learn

18:25

to take steps that offer

18:28

our support these four

18:32

l's look listen lament and learn

18:36

they are the powerful opposites

18:39

of indifference they are the first

18:43

action steps we can take

18:47

when talking to stephen and adrian i

18:49

suggested to them we

18:51

add a fifth l

18:54

love it isn't

18:57

enough to just look listen lament

19:00

and learn we have to manifest

19:04

action we have to recognize

19:07

love as an action verb

19:10

not as a noun love

19:13

moves us to concrete acts of support

19:17

and kindness love helps us overcome

19:20

discomfort with people who are different

19:26

look listen lament and learn

19:31

and then with loving in kindness

19:34

move from indifference to making a

19:38

difference

19:41

rabbi abraham joshua heschel he showed

19:43

us he showed us how he was one of the

19:45

leading

19:46

jewish thinkers of the 20th century so

19:48

much so that for rabbinical students for

19:51

cantorial students

19:52

heschel's writing is required reading

19:55

throughout

19:55

our training but even more important

19:59

than anything

20:00

heschel wrote anything that was

20:04

in his literary work the thing that most

20:07

stood out

20:09

was that it was heschel who always was

20:12

standing beside

20:13

martin luther king jr to lead jewish

20:16

support against black injustice

20:21

together heschel and king

20:25

prayed with their feet

20:30

heschel's words to his fellow jews

20:32

during

20:34

those marches are inspiring

20:38

he'd say over and over again let us

20:40

dodge

20:41

no issues let us yield no inch to

20:44

bigotry let us make

20:45

no compromise with callousness

20:53

if you open your torah at the beginning

20:56

in genesis

20:57

if you open up the torah and you start

20:59

to study you realize the torah tells us

21:02

that god

21:03

created different kinds of plants

21:08

different kinds of animals it says it

21:11

over and over again in the story of

21:12

creation

21:14

but the torah also makes it clear that

21:17

god

21:18

didn't create different kinds

21:21

of human beings genesis records

21:26

god created the first human being from

21:30

whom

21:30

all other human beings are descendants

21:37

as jews we must speak against all forms

21:41

of hatred

21:42

if we stay indifferent we become

21:45

accessories to oppressive deeds

21:50

the rise of anti-semitism in the united

21:53

states and europe has

21:54

us all concerned large acts of

21:57

anti-semitism

21:58

don't just happen they follow days

22:01

weeks and years of smaller but daily

22:04

acts of anti-semitism

22:06

after 2 000 years of persecution

22:09

expulsions violence the genocide of six

22:11

million

22:12

jews anti-semitism is rightly called

22:16

the oldest hatred

22:19

and what do we say never forget

22:23

never again

22:27

but history is filled with documented

22:30

acts of hate and violence

22:32

based on bias and intolerance against

22:35

race ethnic diversity religious freedom

22:39

and gender distinctions and we must

22:43

apply

22:43

the standard of never forget never again

22:46

to the victims of

22:48

all injustice two thousand years ago the

22:52

talmud informed us

22:53

you are not required to finish the task

22:57

but neither are you free to desist from

23:00

it

23:02

there is a personal intersection between

23:05

anti-semitism

23:07

and racism mistrust

23:10

and division on both personal and

23:13

political levels

23:14

exist between jewish people

23:18

and people of black heritage

23:19

unfortunately within our country

23:22

today and i believe that working to

23:26

strengthen those relationships between

23:28

jews and people of color is a way

23:31

to reduce anti-semitism

23:34

as oppressed people we are natural

23:38

allies but this doesn't happen

23:43

unless we reach out

23:46

we have to reach out to our black

23:48

friends with support

23:50

we have to be willing to look listen

23:53

lament

23:54

and learn we have to look at their

23:56

situation

23:57

listen to their needs lament their

23:59

circumstances

24:00

learn their perspective and then we have

24:04

to summon the courage to act on their

24:06

behalf

24:08

indifference to both anti-semitism and

24:11

racism

24:12

is not an option

24:16

scott kramer is here today scott you got

24:17

to raise your hand at least so people

24:18

here i know the cameras can't catch you

24:20

i'll put you on video later but scott

24:22

is vice president our congregation chair

24:24

of the social action committee

24:26

and we have been working on initiatives

24:28

of learning and action

24:30

to address injustice when it's right in

24:33

front of us

24:35

so i want you to reach out to me or

24:37

reach out to scott or alexander as our

24:39

temple president reach out to us right

24:41

after the holidays

24:43

discuss some options that we're

24:46

participating in within our community

24:50

this new year we have to perform the

24:54

midst of tikkun alum

24:56

we have to help repair our broken world

25:01

there's important work to be done

25:04

and we need to remember that all human

25:06

beings are created equal

25:08

and in the image of god

25:13

may god help us set aside indifference

25:17

so we cry out against all prejudice and

25:19

hatred

25:21

cry out against violence and oppression

25:24

instead of indifference this new year

25:27

let's

25:28

make a difference and in doing so may we

25:31

stand united

25:33

for freedom justice and

25:36

peace in our world

25:39

the shanatova happy

25:43

healthy and peaceful new year

25:46

amen

English (auto-generated)