HAVDALAH OF HOPE

One flaming candle,

multiple wicks burning as one,

light from many candles woven together

shines boldly beyond a single capacity…

This night,

bidding farewell to Shabbat

and welcoming the new week,

Havdalah candle’s brilliance

is now surrounded by a circle of eleven candles,

light resurrected from life snuffed out

at the Tree of Life Synagogue,

(a sign in front reading, *Love your neighbor, no exceptions*)

brothers and sisters, kindred souls, part of Creation’s family

surging before, behind, above, below, around, within

and connecting us all in

the great animal, vegetable, and mineral TREE OF LIFE.

This night the yarmulked, prayer-shawed,

clergy-collared, kufi-hatted, seculared,

(witnessed by the uniformed and plain-clothed guardians)

men, women, and children, wearing

gold (not sewn Star of David)

*No Place for Hate* paper lapel stickers,

circle the encircled candle,

a beautiful solemn assembly,

arms weaving through each other,

swaying, gently, rhythmically as one,

tears swelling, flowing,

but not quenching the light,

listening as

the lilting angelic voice of the cantor

swirls like creation, through and around them,

*Eliyahu Hanavi…Elijah the prophet*…

*Bimhera B’yameinu yavo eleinu*…

*Come speedily and in our day*…

And soon the voices of all become

one with the one, one with the One,

praying, praising, imploring, blessing,

trusting that

*dovka—*“in spite of” they’ll never

stop dancing, trying to make

the world the way it needs to be.

And, in Spirit, this circle is

surrounded and also lighted by

candles of Charleston, Parkland,

Sandy Hook, Columbine,

Laramie, Orlando,

Ferguson, Charlottesville, Tallahassee

Selma, Birmingham,

Wounded Knee, Sarajevo,

Kristallnacht,

Auschwitz and Buchenwald…

an eternal circle, too many to name,

but this day must not forget,

their blood spilled, victims of

the violence of hatred, prejudice,

systemic racism,

cultural and religious bigotry.

But this day these diverse souls,

neighbors in humanity and creation,

will not forget

*L’Simcha*, Tree of Life but

*dovka*, will move on in hope—

Hope beyond hopes,

and weaving arms once more for

the final song and prayer,

of healing and peace,

bid each other

*Shavuah Tov,* A Good Week!—

knowing their combined brightness

is stronger than the darkness of hate—

and, as, in all Jewish communities,

they enjoy food and drink together

and then depart

into a cloudy night,

stars and firey fall leaves hidden,

but healing hearts rekindled by

love and *shalom.*

ejhs

11/05/18

**When Evil Darkens Our World**

By Chaim Stern

When evil darkens our world, let us be the bearers of light.

When fists are clenched in self-righteous rage, let our hands be open for the sake of peace.

When injustice slam the door on the ill, the poor, the old, and the stranger, let us pry the doors

open.

Where shelter is lacking, let us be builders.

Where food and clothing are needed, let us be providers.

Where knowledge is denied, let us be champions of learning.

When dissent is stifled, let our voices speak truth to power.

When Earth and its creatures are threatened, let us be their guardians.

When bias, greed, and bigotry erode our country’s values, let us proclaim liberty throughout the

Land.

In the places where no one acts like a human being,

let us bring courage;

let us bring compassion;

let us bring humanity.

**Olam Chesed Yibaneh**

By Rabbi Menachem Creditor

I will build this world from love…

You must build this world from love…

If we build this world from love…

Then God will build this world from love…

