

May Our Anger be Holy

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Source: Velveteen Rabbi

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Oppression breeds anger to which we must attend.

Once, we recited this text out of powerlessness. We asked God to pour forth wrath because we were unable to express our own. But in today's world, where we enjoy agency to an unprecedented degree, we must resist the temptations of perennial victimhood and yearning for revenge.

And yet we know that rage, unexpressed, will fester. Let us therefore acknowledge our communal pain. Let us recognize the intersecting systems of oppression which ensnare our world, from antisemitism to xenophobia, and feel appropriate anger in response. And let us recommit ourselves to honing our anger so that it might fuel us to create change, so that our wrath may lead us to redemption.

In the words of the poet Audre Lorde: Focused with precision, [anger] can become a powerful source of energy serving progress and change. And when I speak of change, I do not mean a simple switch of positions or a temporary lessening of tensions, nor the ability to smile or feel good. I am speaking of a basic and radical alteration in those assumptions underlining our lives. And let us say: Amen.