



*Mussar Leadership Program*  
*Contemporary Practice for a Responsible Life*



MARCH 1, 2017

Gravestones at Mt. Carmel

What are we called upon to do in the face of rising anti-Semitism as embodied in this week's cemetery desecration and bomb threats?

First, to express our continuing gratitude and appreciation for the country we live in. These are actions that are still recognized as outrages by the vast majority of people, decried sincerely at all levels of government. This is a far cry from the official anti-Semitism we have experienced at other times and in other places.

While both repair and vigilance are called for, they are not sufficient. In fact, were it not for the dishonor involved, I would say leave the stones where they are. Let them be a reminder of the broken world in which we live and in which we are all complicit. I would leave them as a reminder that while we have suffered broken stones, others have suffered broken bodies and souls. Rather than focusing on fixing and defending our own community, I would suggest rather organizing to fix and defend the many marginalized communities around us.

What could groups of Jews do to clean up sections of our city the way people have come together to clean up Mt. Carmel?

How can Jewish philanthropies help to provide funding so that local schools can provide tutoring, music and art? How many Jewish businesses could provide living wages to its workers or health benefits?

This list, the list of what is broken in this community and remains broken in plain sight and to which the Jewish community in general remains impervious, is long.

What if we let the fallen gravestones be a reminder of this. Let them be a wake-up call triggering our impulse to repair the world - not only to defend ourselves.

B'shalom,  
Rabbi Ira Stone

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