

# HUFFPOST POLITICS

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## Time for a healing

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Enough. Our country is breaking, and instead of reaching across aisles, instead of reconciliation, we are getting angrier and angrier, positions are hardening, and all the carefully laid plans of good men like Dallas Police Chief Brown are disintegrating within the span of a week. Why? Because there is no leadership. That's right. We do not have a leader.

We are tolerating one cavalier and one corrupt presidential candidate who each think they are above the standards of good behavior and public accountability as they seek the highest office in the land. We have a Washington power structure in each branch of government completely removed from the citizenry: a coolly distant elitist in the White House worried about his global legacy as his nation burns, a dysfunctional Supreme Court, and a legislature that simply can't legislate.

There is no one singular voice emerging from our political, social, and economic morass that actually, consistently, is a moral call to a better American tomorrow. All we get is an exclusive state bureaucracy barely accessible to the common man in terms of forms and regulation, a One percent that continues to go its merry wealthy way hoarding resources and power, and a rank and file of middle and poor that are starting to feed off old hatreds as their own social and economic frustrations fester. This is not the Union we want. This is not the America we can all survive in as a Republic. Something's got to give.

As a Rabbi, I start by looking at my own faith community, but I see no pronouncements from the community organizations — the progressive, pluralist, and philanthropic bodies that dialogue within the Jewish community. They are wrapped up in their own intra-communal partisanship that matters only to the committed base within their cohorts. I look around at the broader mainline faith communities. I don't see much more. Perhaps a public statement here and there about a particular issue, but no action. Where are the voices of a Heschel, a Merton, a King? The evangelical right, and the fundamentalists of every faith, are now the nation's, indeed the world's, religious voice in the public square. The progressive voice has abdicated its political role, and with it, its power for change.

So, let's start here. I am one Rabbi, one lone clergyman, but I'll say this outright: our democracy is teetering, and people of all backgrounds who are hurting — the working poor, minorities, civil servants concerned about the future of their pensions and everyone concerned about their children's quality of life, the disenfranchised non-One Percenters who can no longer brook a State that got away from them — that's become too complex to navigate except for those with financial and cultural capital — we all need to come together.

I call on my colleagues from the non-fundamentalist sectors of our faith traditions to work in our communities — whether through the pen, pulpit, or programming, neighborhood by neighborhood — on bringing black and white together, veterans and artists, union members and those who can't find work in the trades anymore, residents from the projects, led by clergy of every stripe because there's no one else to do it, and because that's our job as men and women who believe in a G-d that inspires awe, and in Whose ways we are commanded to walk.

We are all fallible. No clergy person is perfect or more earnest than any other human. We are all just flesh and blood. But, those of us who claim to care about our religious traditions must cede that our calling and our training compel us to try our best to create a world in which all feel at home. And that is a message we can bring to this democracy. Enough. The time is ripe for a healing.