

A Prayer for Oklahoma

by Abby Jacobson, Emanuel Synagogue, Oklahoma City, OK

Lord our God, we stood before You just a week ago to receive the Ten Statements of Your Torah. We stood, as though with our ancestors, and listened to the Torah reader chant descriptions of the smoking mountain, the thunderous rumbling, and the long-awaited voice of God.

This afternoon, the people of central Oklahoma did not stand to hear the voice of God. We sat, we paced, and we huddled. We listened to the voice of the meteorologists and watched as dark clouds swirled together over a cone of destruction. The rain fell upward, not down, and the thunderous roar of the swirling winds carried, and we saw the awesome power of God. This was not Shavuot—the Feast of Weeks that marked our days of freedom. This was minutes that seemed like years and trapped us into watching the same images of destruction.

Merciful God, a great and powerful windstorm has passed, and it has torn apart the buildings and shattered the rocks before You. You told Elijah, the prophet, that You were not in the windstorm. Please, then, be in the still, small voices of the children crying out to be found. Be in the voices of the rescuers calling out for survivors. Be in the cries of those who are lost and of those who have lost.

May it be Your will that those who are missing be found alive and be cared for well, and may the people of central Oklahoma find strength in You and in one another as we rebuild what we can.