

P'tach Lanu Sha'ar: Open the Gates



A Reflection on Access to Safety, Welcome and Dignity

"P'tach lanu sha'ar, open for us the gates – open the gates even as they are closing," we cry.

In this season of reflection and renewal, we stand ready at the Gates of Repentance, hoping that they will remain open to us.

"P'tach lanu sha'ar, open for us the gates – open the gates even as they are closing," they cry. Just as we consider our own fate, we hear the voices of more than 120 million refugees and displaced people worldwide.

Their cries warn us that the gates of countries around the world are in danger of closing as a history of a turning inward, rather than confronting collective dangers, repeats itself. Their cries warn us that the gates of our own country have closed because of prejudice and short-sightedness.

Their cries warn us that the gates of our community are in danger of closing if we equivocate about our responsibility to welcome the stranger, rather than choosing to stand firm in our moral obligation.

Their cries warn us that the gates of our hearts are in danger of closing because of fear and indifference.

We know, though, that the Gates of Repentance never really close to those whose hearts remain open to change – that we hold the keys to our own redemption.

Let us not allow the actions of a powerful few to deny a future to those whose lives are in danger at our country's gates.

Let us – the many – push open the gates of our country as today we push open the gates of heaven, demanding that our nation be a safe haven for all.

Let our quiet contemplation and reflection today cause us to rise up tomorrow to ensure that the gates of the world, our country, our community, and our hearts open to all those who cry out to us, as Jewish tradition mandates.

Our voices join the voices of all those searching for a place to call home, that they may live in safety and in freedom. Together we say, "P'tach lanu sha'ar, open for us the gates – open the gates to all those who cry out."