

# 99.9 percent of protesters were non-violent, peaceful, heartfelt



In our country, division over political perspectives is part of a healthy democracy. It's not always pretty, but that's part of the challenging process of compromise.

What happened in Charlottesville, however, was cut from a different cloth. It was a desecration of American values — an outright assault on Democrats, Republicans, independents, people of all faiths and no faith, across all lines of race, class and sexual identity.

There can be no moral equivocation in the face of racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and the domestic terrorism we witnessed in Charlottesville. We must not allow Heather Heyer's life to have been taken in vain.

When the moral bedrock of the White House begins to crack, that fracture reverberates across these United States, and "we the people" must stand up for the common good.

That's what I experienced in Phoenix over this past week. People of all walks of life, reflecting the beautiful diversity our city, state and country, came together.

In synagogues, churches and mosques from Paradise Valley to Fountain Hills to downtown Phoenix, we lit candles, channeling the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that." We were different traditions coming together to sing in one voice.

We gathered at the state Capitol to hear the ancient sound of the shofar, the ram's horn, awakening us to action.



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President Donald Trump protesters gather outside Convention Center in downtown Phoenix.

From various locations, we marched downtown, reclaiming the voice of decency, compassion and justice in the public square.

We carried signs of unity, reminding our brothers and sisters that, "All of humanity, created in God's image, means all;" that "Love your neighbor (includes) your black, brown, immigrant, disabled, religiously different, LGBTQ, fully human neighbor."

Phoenix police officers went out of their way to keep us safe, providing escorts on each leg of the march. The few on the fringe who came downtown bent on provoking law enforcement do not represent the 99.9 percent of the participants who modeled peaceful, passionate, non-violent protest.

Law enforcement actions to deal with

the few bad actors do not tarnish their stellar performance to keep peace and order.

While Police Chief Jeri Williams welcomes a review of their actions, we should applaud the chief and her officers for keeping us safe.

As our country desperately seeks leadership to illuminate a way forward, the collective light of the good people of Phoenix pierced the darkness.

*John Linder is in his 10th year serving as senior rabbi at Temple Solel in Paradise Valley. He is also involved with the Valley Interfaith Project and, nationally, with the Union for Reform Judaism's Religious Action Center. Email him at [rabbilinder@templesolel.org](mailto:rabbilinder@templesolel.org).*