

Moving Forward After Roe

The day after the Supreme Court decision was announced, we held a Havdalah service on the steps of the CBE Sanctuary. You can read Rabbi Timoner's powerful words from the service below:

Yesterday was a watershed moment in American history. For almost fifty years, ever since *Roe v. Wade* established the right to an abortion for women, the conservative movement has relentlessly sought to overturn that right. Many of us marched to defend it in the 1980s. We did clinic defense, as the battle took the form of violence against abortion providers and women seeking health care. And since then, abortion has been restricted and defunded in states and counties across the country over many decades. I want to remind us that 89 percent of counties in America have no abortion provider. That was true before yesterday.

Yesterday's decision is terrible for women; for people of all genders; for the honor, dignity, and standing of the Supreme Court of the United States; for American society. Women will die. Mostly poor, Black, and brown women will die. Women will die.

But the difference between before and after is not as stark as it seems. We have been fighting this exact fight for more than fifty years. Conservative and patriarchal forces have been coming after our bodies, have been denying the autonomy of our bodies, have been seeking to control reproduction, for a long, long time. Possibly from the beginning of humanity.

I want to make sure that everyone gathered here understands that Judaism **REQUIRES** abortion when a pregnant person's life is in danger. And the majority of Jews read Jewish sources to say that abortion is warranted when the social and emotional health and wellness of a pregnant person is at stake. This means that the ban on abortion is a violation of our First Amendment rights, our freedom to exercise our religion. We also know that in the last fifty years, many Catholic countries have made abortion legal, despite the fact that they are Catholic countries. They recognize that whether abortion is legal or illegal, abortions will continue to happen because they will continue to be necessary. The only difference is whether people who need to end a pregnancy can get the health care that they need.

So what will we do? We will do what we have always done. We will look out for each other. We will look out for the pregnant people who are trapped in places where they cannot get the reproductive health care they need. We will pass laws in the states where we can, protecting and defending providers so that people who need abortions can travel here or receive medication abortions by mail. We will donate to abortion funds to help pay for travel and other care expenses. We will flood social media and search engines with accurate information about how to get care.



We will find the courage to tell our stories, our sometimes painful and often stigmatized stories, about why some pregnancies have to end and why abortion must be protected for all, so that everyone is aware that they know someone who has ended a pregnancy. Because everyone knows someone who has ended a pregnancy. And we will engage in the long, long battle to change the laws back.

This generation and the next generations will pick up the fight that we have been fighting and will turn the tide until it's no longer a contested question. No one who is against abortion needs to have one. But no one who is against abortion should be able to tell other people what they can and cannot do with their own bodies.

Here's the thing I know. *I'm going to say something surprising.* We are winning. It does not feel like it today. Of course it doesn't. But girls and women and female-identified people today are more certain about our equality than we ever have been in history. We know that gender has nothing to do with ability or promise. We know — girls today know — without a doubt that we are capable of anything we set our minds to. No one — no court, no law — can make us go back. This, I know. We are fierce, we are determined, and we are powerful. There is no stopping the girls and women and female-identified people of these generations and those who will follow us.

We will be completely and entirely equal.

The next wave of the movement begins now.