

## 1. READER ONE

Here at Temple Emanuel, we display with pride the iconic photograph of Dr. King and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel at the Selma March which led to the enactment of the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965. Rabbi Heschel was Dr. King's great ally and a scholar of the Jewish Prophetic Tradition, and he reminded us that the "prophet was an individual who said 'No' to his society, condemning its habits and assumptions, its complacency. The purpose of prophecy is to conquer callousness, to change the inner man as well as to revolutionize history."

## 2. READER TWO

In the spirit of Dr. King and Rabbi Heschel, this evening is a time to recommit ourselves to the work against the related challenges of white supremacy and anti-semitism, while also remembering that we need to strengthen our bonds with those who share our values. And, as tonight's speaker will discuss, the importance of recognizing and embracing the diversity of backgrounds within our own Jewish community.

## 3. READER THREE

Dr. King's vision was rooted in a faith that right would prevail: *"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."*

But he also knew that only through the work of our own hands would the world become a better place: *"Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. . . . No social advance rolls in on the wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of dedicated individuals, who are willing to be co-workers with God."*

This evening, we give thanks to all those who engage in that "tireless effort and persistent work."

## 4. READER FOUR

Dr. King explained that *"We are simply seeking to bring into full realization the American dream -- a dream yet unfulfilled. A dream of equality of opportunity, of privilege and property widely distributed; a dream of a land where [people] no longer argue that the color of a [person's] skin determines the content of [their] his character; the dream of a land where every[one] will respect the dignity and worth of human personality -- this is the dream."*

*"When it is realized, the jangling discords of our nation will be transformed into a beautiful symphony" and everyone "will know that America is truly the land of the free and the home of the brave."*

We also remember that the journey to this Land of Promise is far from finished, and that many obstacles remain.

## 5. READER FIVE

Particularly in recent months, we have been reminded that this is not just a challenge in America, but world-wide, as well. In his last book, published in 1967, Dr. King described our world as a "Great World House *in which we have to live together -- black and white, Easterner and Westerner, Gentile and Jew, Catholic and Protestant, Muslim and Hindu -- a family unduly separated in ideas, culture and interest, who, because we can never again live apart, must learn somehow to live with each other in peace.*"

Pulitzer Prize winning author Isabel Wilkerson, in her book *Caste*, provides a take on this metaphor, which takes us deeper into the problems posed by us all living in this house.

*"We in the developed world are like homeowners who inherited a house on a piece of land that is beautiful on the outside, but whose soil is unstable loam and rock, heaving and contracting over generations, cracks patched but the deeper ruptures waived away for decades, centuries even.*

## 6. READER SIX

*"Many people may rightly say, 'I had nothing to do with how this all started. I have nothing to do with the sins of the past. . . . And, yes. Not one of us was here when this house was built. . . . But here we are, the current occupants of a property with stress cracks and bowed walls and fissures built into the foundation. We are the heirs to whatever is right or wrong with it. We did not erect the uneven pillars or joists, BUT THEY ARE OURS TO DEAL WITH NOW."*

Our ability to deal with this broken house is the existential challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – not just in America, but in the entire world. We can only repair this house if we face up to its defects.

Dr. King challenged us to do so, and to do so with a moral clarity rooted in our shared religious values. That is why we celebrate him this evening.