

Shabbat Tzedek | Justice Shabbat 5781

Y'DID NEFESH

Y'did nefesh, av harachaman,
m'shoch avd'cha el r'tzonecha.
Yarutz avd'cha k'mo ayal,
yishtachaveh el mul hadarecha.

יְדִיד נֶפֶשׁ, אָב הַרַחֲמָן,
מְשׁוֹךְ עַבְדְּךָ אֶל רְצוֹנְךָ.
יָרוּץ עַבְדְּךָ כְּמוֹ אַיִל,
יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶל מוּל הַדָּרֶךְ.

Heart's delight, Source of mercy, draw Your servant into Your arms:
I leap like a deer to stand in awe before You.

Candlelighting

Help me perfect my ways of loving and caring,
Inspire me to make myself whole
so that I may honor Your name and
create a world of justice and peace.

The candles are lit before the blessing is recited.

BARUCH atah, Adonai
Eloheinu, Melech haolam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav,
v'tzivanu l'hadlik
ner shel Shabbat.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתַיִךְ,
וְצִוֵּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who hallows us with mitzvot,
commanding us to kindle the light of Shabbat.

Sh'ma and its Blessings

ENTRANCES to holiness are everywhere.
The possibility of ascent is all the time,
even at unlikely times and through unlikely places.
There is no place on earth without the Presence.

BAR'CHU et Adonai ham'vorach!

Baruch Adonai ham'vorach

l'olam va-ed!

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ!
בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד!

PRAISE ADONAI to whom praise is due forever!

Praised be Adonai to whom praise is due,
now and forever!

THIS IS AN HOUR of change.

Within it we stand uncertain on the border of light.

Shall we draw back or cross over?

Where shall our hearts turn?

Shall we draw back, my brother, my sister,
or cross over?

This is the hour of change, and within it,
we stand quietly
on the border of light.

What lies before us?

Shall we draw back, my brother, my sister,
or cross over?

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, הַמְּעַרִיב עַרְבִים.

Baruch atah, Adonai, hamaariv aravim.

EVERLASTING LOVE You offered Your people Israel
 by teaching us Torah and mitzvot, laws and precepts.
 Therefore, Adonai our God,
 when we lie down and when we rise up,
 we will meditate on Your laws and Your commandments.
 We will rejoice in Your Torah forever.
 Day and night we will reflect on them
 for they are our life and doing them lengthens our days.
 Never remove Your love from us.
 Praise to You, Adonai, who loves Your people Israel.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, אֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Baruch atah, Adonai, ohev amo Yisrael.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד!

Sh'ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad!

Hear, O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is One!

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Baruch shem k'vod malchuto l'olam va-ed.

Blessed is God's glorious majesty forever and ever.

V'ahavta

So you shall love what is holy
with all your courage, with all your passion
with all your strength.

Let the words that have come down
shine in our words and our actions.

We must teach our children to know and understand them.

We must speak about what is good
and holy within our homes
when we are working, when we are at play,
when we lie down and when we get up.

Let the work of our hands speak of goodness.

Let it run in our blood
and glow from our doors and windows.

Let love fill our hearts with its clear precious water.

Heaven and earth observe how we cherish or spoil our world.

Heaven and earth watch whether we choose life or choose death.

We must choose life so our children's children may live.

Be quiet and listen to the still small
voice within that speaks in love.

Open to that voice, hear it, heed it and work for life.

Let us remember and strive to be good.

Let us remember to find what is holy
within and without.¹

¹ Marge Piercy from *The Art of Blessing the Day* (adapted)

ADONAI, s'fatai tiftach,
ufi yagid t'hilatecha.

אֲדֹנָי, שְׁפֹתַי תִּפְתָּח,
וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ.

ADONAI, open up my lips,
that my mouth may declare Your praise.

Readings for Silent Reflection

I refuse to accept despair as the final response to the ambiguities of history.
I refuse to accept the idea that the "is-ness" of humanity's present nature makes us morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal "ought-ness" that forever confronts us.

I refuse to accept the idea that humanity is mere flotsam and jetsam in the river of life, unable to influence the unfolding events which surround us.

I refuse to accept the view that humankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and community can never become a reality.

I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of nuclear annihilation.

I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.

I believe that even amid today's mortar bursts and whining bullets, there is still hope for a brighter tomorrow.

I believe that wounded justice, lying prostrate on the blood-flowing streets of our nations, can be lifted from this dust of shame to reign supreme among human beings.

I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits.

I believe that what self-centered people have torn down, people other-centered can build up.

I still believe that we shall overcome.²

² The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., from his Acceptance Address for the Nobel Peace Prize, Dec. 10, 1964

We were all once strangers in the land of Egypt, but because of the dynamics of race in North America—such as unconscious racial bias and social conditioning around stereotypical Jewish traits—Jews of color are perpetual strangers in communal Jewish life. Consequently, we Jews of color often are greeted with long stares or concerned looks, confused for hired help, and constantly asked to explain how or why we are Jewish.

A young biracial Jew once shared with me the negative experience of “people questioning other people’s identity. If there are five Jewish people in a room, all of them white except for one person who’s black, invariably, one of the white people will ask only the black person: ‘So, how are you Jewish?’”...

When we leave people out, we cut off vision, possibility and power. Jews of color are remarkable and have many stories and lessons that our broader community has yet to hear and learn from us. Racial and ethnic diversity inclusion will play a critical role in guiding us toward the robust Jewish future we seek.³

When I think about my goals for 2021, I hope to see white Jews move from being “allies” to “accomplices” to people of color, starting with Jews of Color. While an ally acknowledges the problem and may share petitions and voice support, they rarely find themselves truly working in the trenches for the people they are trying to help. To move into being an accomplice, it becomes necessary not only to educate oneself but also educate your community and actively create a movement with those who are working for a more just world...

In the Talmud, Rabbi Tarfon says, “It is not your responsibility to finish the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.” This demands for us to take the role of active responsibility in our communities to do what we know to be the right thing, especially if it may not be what is popular or comfortable.⁴

³ April Baskin from "How to Help Combat the “Perpetual Stranger Status” of Jews of Color," <https://urj.org/blog/how-help-combat-perpetual-stranger-status-jews-color>

⁴ Isaac Ofori-Solomon from "Dear Jewish Community: We Can't Return to 'Normal,'" <https://www.heyalma.com/dear-jewish-community-we-cant-return-to-normal/>

To those who have said, "Be patient and wait," we have long said that we cannot be patient. We do not want our freedom gradually, but we want to be free now! We are tired. We are tired of being beaten by policemen. We are tired of seeing our people locked up in jail over and over again. And then you holler, "Be patient." How long can we be patient? We want our freedom and we want it now. We do not want to go to jail. But we will go to jail if this is the price we must pay for love, community, and true peace.

I appeal to all of you to get into this great revolution that is sweeping this nation. Get in and stay in the streets of every city, every village and hamlet of this nation until true freedom comes, until the revolution of 1776 is complete. We must get in this revolution and complete the revolution.⁵

Our ancient history began with slavery and the yearning for freedom. During the Middle Ages my people lived for a thousand years in the ghettos of Europe . Our modern history begins with a proclamation of emancipation.

It is for these reasons that it is not merely sympathy and compassion for the black people of America that motivates us. It is above all and beyond all such sympathies and emotions a sense of complete identification and solidarity born of our own painful historic experience.

When I was the rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under the Hitler regime, I learned many things. The most important thing that I learned under those tragic circumstances was that bigotry and hatred are not 'the most urgent problem. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence...

America must not become a nation of onlookers. America must not remain silent. Not merely black America , but all of America . It must speak up and act,. from the President down to the humblest of us, and not for the sake of the Negro, not for the sake of the black community but for the sake of the image, the idea and the aspiration of America itself.⁶

⁵ Rep. John Lewis from his speech at the March on Washington, August 28, 1963

⁶ Rabbi Joachim Prinz from his speech at the March on Washington, August 28, 1963

MI SHEBEIRACH avoteinu

M'kor hab'rachah l'imoteinu.

May the Source of strength who blessed the ones before us
help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing and let us say, Amen.

Mi shebeirach imoteinu

M'kor hab'rachah laavoteinu.

Bless those in need of healing with *r'fuah sh'leimah*,
the renewal of body, the renewal of spirit, and let us say, Amen.

מִי שֶׁבִּירַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
מִקּוֹר הַבְּרָכָה לְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ.

מִי שֶׁבִּירַךְ אִמּוֹתֵינוּ
מִקּוֹר הַבְּרָכָה לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ.

Recognizing the Good / Hakarat HaTov הכרת הטוב

May we live with the awareness that each day is a miracle and each hour contains wonders.

May we wake up in gratitude and go to sleep in appreciation for all we have been given.

May we seek joy in both the small and great events of our lives, sharing this happiness with others.

And may we always remember to recognize the good in ourselves, in others, and in the world around us.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם וְיוֹם מֵיטִיב לָנוּ

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, she-bechol yom vayom meitiv lanu.

We acknowledge and praise the Source of Being, present throughout our days, bringing us goodness.

Aleinu

Olam chesed yibaneh יבנה חסד עולם ... yai dai dai (4x)

I will build this world from love... yai dai dai
 And you must build this world from love... yai dai dai
 And if we build this world from love... yai dai dai
 Then God will build this world from love... yai dai dai

Olam chesed yibaneh יבנה חסד עולם ... yai dai dai (4x)

El Malei for Victims of Racial Violence⁷

אל מלא רחמים, שוכן במרומים, המצא מנוחה נכונה תחת כנפי השכינה במעלות
 קדושים וטהורים כזהר הרקיע מזהירים, את נשמות כל אחינו בני ארצנו, אנשים נשים
 וטרף, שנהרגו, שגשרפו, שנתלו ונחנקו מפני גזענות ושנאת חיים, בגן עדן תהי מנוחתם.
 אנא בעל הרחמים, הסתירם בסתר כנפיך לעולמים וצרו בצרור החיים את נשמותיהם.
 ה' הוא נחלתם, וינחו בשלום על משכבותיהם. ונאמר אמן

God full of compassion, dwelling on High,
 grant perfect rest beneath the sheltering wings of Your Presence,
 among the holy and the pure who shine with the light of the heavens,
 for the souls of our brothers and sisters, our neighbors,
 men, women, and children, who have been
 killed, burned, and lynched
 because of racism and baseless hate.
 May the Garden of Eden be their resting place.
 Source of compassion,
 keep them in the shelter of Your wings for eternity
 and bind up their souls in the bond of life.
 The Infinite is their inheritance; may they rest in peace, and let us say,

⁷ <https://www.truah.org/resources/el-maleh-rachamim-for-victims-of-racial-violence/>

MOURNER'S KADDISH

YITGADAL v'yitkadash sh'mei raba.

B'alma di v'ra chirutei,
v'yamlich malchutei,
b'chayeichon uv'yomeichon
uv'chayei d'chol beit Yisrael,
baagala uvizman kariv. V'imru: Amen.

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach

l'alam ul'almei almaya.

Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpaar

v'yitromam v'yitnasei,

v'yit'hadar v'yitaleh v'yit'halal

sh'mei d'kudsha b'rich Hu,

l'eila min kol birchata v'shirata,

tushb'chata v'nechemata,

daamiran b'alma. V'imru: Amen.

Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya,

v'chayim aleinu v'al kol Yisrael.

V'imru: Amen.

Oseh shalom bimromav,

Hu yaaseh shalom aleinu,

v'al kol Yisrael. V'imru: Amen.

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא.
בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתְהָ,
וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתְהָ,
בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמַּן קָרִיב. וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ
לְעָלַם וּלְעֵלְמֵי עֵלְמַיָּא.
יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר
וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא,
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא,
לְעֵלְמָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא,
תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא,
דְּאָמִירָן בְּעֵלְמָא. וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא,
וְחַיִּים עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו,
הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ,
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

EXALTED and hallowed be God's great name
in the world which God created, according to plan.
May God's majesty be revealed in the days of our lifetime
and the life of all Israel — speedily, imminently, to which we say Amen.

Blessed be God's great name to all eternity.

Blessed, praised, honored, exalted, extolled, glorified, adored, and lauded
be the name of the Holy Blessed One, beyond all earthly words and songs of blessing,
praise, and comfort. To which we say Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and all Israel.
To which we say Amen.

May the One who creates harmony on high, bring peace to us and to all Israel.
To which we say Amen.

Amen.

Discussion Materials

In 1963 the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now the Union for Reform Judaism) invited The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to address its Biennial Convention. The following texts are excerpts from letters exchanged between Bernard Goodman, the President of the Hebrew Union Congregation in Greenville, Mississippi and Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, President of the UAHC.

As you go through these sources, try to imagine the context from which they emerged. Is the conversation that the Jewish community had during the 1960s the same conversation we are having today? Why or why not? If so, what does this mean?

Take turns reading these texts aloud and raise your own questions or concerns before referring to the questions at the end, which are meant as a jumping off point for further conversation.

Letter 1: November 7, 1963, addressed to the UAHC Board of Trustees

Gentleman [sic]:

At its monthly meeting on November 4, 1963, the Board of Directors of the Hebrew Union Congregation of Greenville, Mississippi, voted to express its protest upon learning of the arrangements for the banquet program of the forthcoming Biennial Convention.

Our tradition cautions us to aid and protect the welfare of our brethren [sic] of the household of Israel wherever they may live. The selection of a controversial figure as a featured speaker, regardless of his ability and achievements, with its attendant publicity places undue and unnecessary pressure upon our already exposed people in this area of the country. We deem the arrangements for the Biennial program to have been ill-timed and ill-advised, and clearly fraught with anxieties for our membership.

We feel deeply distressed and chagrined that the leadership of the [UAHC] did not deem it vital, in so delicate a matter, to consult with our Rabbi and lay leadership before arranging this program. We believe that had our leadership been consulted in advance, and our position given a fair hearing, other arrangements might have been made in the Biennial program, and the feeling of distress which has arisen among our members would have been avoided.

Your truly,

Bernard Goodman, President

Letter 2: November 13, 1963, addressed to Bernard Goodman

Dear Mr. Goodman:

Thank you very much for your letter of November 7 conveying the results of the meeting of your Board of Directors and the protest about the Biennial Assembly. I have read your letter with great care and am deeply distressed with the anguish that has been caused you. I so regret that the invitation to have Dr. King address our Biennial has created such unhappiness for you.

I want to assure you that every action taken in the various areas of Social Action enlists the most careful consideration, the deep and sensitive concern for the difficult position of our fellow Reform Jews in the exposed areas of the South. The many meetings with our southern congregations have created and continue to create that consciousness.

There is much soul-wrestling at the UAHC, much consultation and widespread probing before any action is taken. ...We know that any positive step we take, though these steps be too infrequent, and only the most modest of gestures made, will be castigated by some in the southern congregations.

In candor, I contend we ought to be apologizing to the majority of our congregations who expect more from us than the mere participation in the Washington March, the statement entitled "A Call to Racial Justice" and the invitation extended to Dr. King to address the Biennial banquet. Yet even these pitifully inadequate gestures are the recipients of endless, bitter complaint.

We have done too little...and, if the truth be told, we are far behind every other religious organization and far behind what our ideals demand.

...If it were not for Dr. King, we would today be witnessing savagery and brutality from both sides. Many are convinced that this nation is so deeply in his debt because he has saved us from...the degradation of a violent or physical confrontation between fellow Americans [and] he has made certain that his people and all Americans see the striving toward equality by the American Negro as part of the basic religious precepts to which we all pay homage or at least lip service. If we do not uphold his hand, if we do not support his effort, others will take his place who will bring us to calamity.

Dr. King was invited because of the noble sense of religious idealism he represents, because of the high principles he has brought into play. He stands as a mountain among the foothills and to have invited another would have been to undermine his stature and to have given strength to his foes.

Sincerely yours,

Maurice N. Eisendrath
Questions for discussion:

- What were your immediate responses to this exchange? Did anything surprise you?
- Does it make a difference in your feelings about the vote of the Mississippi congregation to know that in 1958 there was a bombing of a Reform synagogue in Atlanta, whose rabbi was an outspoken advocate for civil rights?
- Do you see parallels in this disagreement to current political discussions?



8

DEUTERONOMY 16:20 דברים טז:כ

Closing Song

Circle round for freedom,
 circle round for peace.
 For all of us imprisoned,
 circle for release.
 Circle for the planet,
 circle for each soul.
 For the children of our children,
 keep the circle whole.⁹

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⁸ Artwork by Erica Shultz Yakovetz <https://www.etsy.com/listing/845854024/justice-justice-ii-8x10-print?variation1=1516474179&variation0=1516474175>

⁹ Cantor Linda Hirschhorn, "Circle Chant," *The Music of Linda Hirschhorn*