

MLK Jr Shabbat  
Friday, January 18, 2013  
Honoring Spiritual & Religious Dissidents & Dissenters  
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Shir Tikvah Congregation

We gather this Shabbat to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King's life was an elegy to justice, a vision of who we could all become when given a fair chance.

Dr. King was a faithful dissenter; he engaged in non-violent protest to transform a racist society into a world of equality and opportunity.

"Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue." [MLK Jr, Letter from a Birmingham Jail].

In his memory, we lift up and celebrate the inheritors of his great legacy: Our brothers and sisters of all faith traditions who seek to make their houses of worship and our world shine with the light of equality and overflow with justice. We welcome you courageous souls into our midst tonight. And we thank you, deeply, with hearts overflowing with gratitude for your presence, your vision, and your leadership which gives meaning and purpose to existence.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel marched with Dr. King in Selma and said that walk for justice felt like his "feet were praying." Heschel taught: **The liturgical movement must become a revolutionary movement, seeking to overthrow the forces that continue to destroy the promise, the hope, the vision.**

On this night, in the quiet revolution of Shabbat, we exalt those who courageously stand for freedom, who respond to God's call with expansive love, who defiantly refuse fear as a moral ethic, who aspire to make our broken world whole once again. You who are engaging in this work now, or have done this holy work in the past, you all the magnificent colors of God's perfect rainbow, who toil for hours in protests and committee

meetings, in legislative hearings, who door knock and send emails and tweets, who give your time and your talent and your treasure; who believe in a vision of a world redeemed where the lion does lie down with the lamb, where all bellies are full and everyone's vote is counted and all schools have books and all children have clean water to drink and all women may determine the fate of their own bodies and all loving couples can legally marry; a world where young men are never again arrested for driving while black and the scourge of gun violence is but a distant memory and banks exists to support our communities and our Israeli and Palestinian brothers and sisters have made peace; we who know that tomorrow will be better than today because we've joined hands and are marching forward together, we invite you to rise, so we may bestow upon you this blessing:

From enemies to the men who established peace between Israel in Egypt, Anwar El-Sadat and Menachem Begin:

Let there be no more war or bloodshed.  
Let there be no more suffering or denial of rights.  
Let there be no more despair or loss of faith (Sadat).

No more wars. No more bloodshed. Peace unto you. Shalom, Salaam, Forever! (Begin).