

RABBI JACK'S MESSAGE IN A MINUTE



Usually I don't believe in ghosts. But the presence of the late Martin Luther King is palpable to me. Similarly, I feel the spirit of Moses strongly as we revisit his role in this week's Torah reading, as deliverer, striving mightily to free his people from bondage under the Pharaoh. The verses in *Vaera*, the Torah portion in Exodus, reflect perhaps the most significant leadership trait of Moses. Namely, his refusal to give up despite serious setbacks. This was true of Reverend King, and his movement too.

The road to freedom for our biblical ancestors was fraught with failure. For example, Moses and Aaron's initial plea to "let my people go" was met with the King of Egypt decreeing that the Hebrews double their production of bricks, resulting in the slaves being more dispirited about their chances for liberation. Yes, there were steps backwards, but they were followed by forward movement. And, when the Israelites were finally released they encountered new existential challenges in the desert and wilderness.

Despite many measurable gains for African-Americans, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the election of President Obama for instance, Black lives still face inordinate threats as a result of continuing racism, discrimination, and deadly hate crimes. The struggle to make Dr. King's dream come true is ongoing.

This Friday night at 7:30 with song, prayer and words of unity we will conduct our fifth annual MLK Shabbat service. Our guest speaker is Runnie Myles, a local teacher, community activist and man of faith.

The history and experiences of Jews and people of color are similar in many ways and so we stand in solidarity with all our brothers and sisters who have been the victims of slavery and prejudice. Come join us for this important worship and program gathering. Let's have a strong showing. Invite many others, share our Zoom information. The entire community has been invited as Temple Emanu-El believes in the importance of making Long Beach a true beacon of light, demonstrating equality, justice and dignity for all of God's children. Together and with the tenacity embodied by Moses and Martin, we will not give up. We shall eventually overcome.

L'shalom,

Rabbi Jack