



January 2024 D'Var Torah

Dear Friends,

There are two holidays during this month of January that can give us hope as we enter a new civil year that promises to be a time of challenge at many levels.

On Monday, January 15 we will observe the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday. Dr. King's spiritual brother and comrade for social justice, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, referred to him as a modern day prophet and a sign that God has not forsaken the United States of America. And so on this day we recommit ourselves to his vision of a better world dedicated to acts of brotherhood and sisterhood and love for one another.

Thursday, January 25, is Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for the Trees, on the Jewish calendar. Although there may be snow on the ground in Connecticut, in Israel the first signs of spring can be seen with red flowers and green fields flourishing in the northern region of the Galilee. This is a time for rededication to the Land of Israel and our partnership with the Almighty in tending to the environment. It is a sign of hope that both physical and spiritual renewal can occur even in the depths of winter.

May these two sacred days, both ancient and contemporary, give us hope and spur us on to action to improve our world as God's partners in the ongoing work of creation as we begin 2024.

Best wishes,

Rabbi Stephen Shulman,
Pastoral Services