



January 2026 D'Var Torah

Dear Friends,

Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, a modern sacred day in our civil calendar, is being observed this year on Monday, January 19. My colleague, Rabbi Killy Kaufman, has composed the following prayer which I share with you:

PRAYER IN HONOR OF MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

Dr. King would have faced hard facts today.
He would know the number of children
going hungry in America this very minute.
He would know the number of our war dead,
and those wounded in new ways.

He would have seen beyond the numbers,
To the faces of our people,
And he would still have faith in them,
And in what is right.

He would be preaching now
A determined, measured, poetic, prophet outrage.
He would be teaching by example
Our civic duty of compassion,
And decrying the grave civic danger of cynicism.

He would challenge the strange new ideas
that money equals speech
and corporations are people in a democracy.
When he gave his life for peoples' rights
of speech, and assembly, and the vote,
it was for people
who had no money to pay for speech.
They knew speech as an unalienable right,
And their wealth of spirit sufficed.

May we learn again to reach out for that which is high. Amen.

I wish you all a meaningful Dr. Martin Luther King holiday and holy day.

Shalom,

Rabbi Stephen Shulman,
Pastoral Services

Dr. King had faith in a few great things:
One was our essential American dream.
Not a middle-class American dream,
or an upper-class, a working-poor,
or an impoverished-class American dream.
But the defining American dream
which lifts up those bowed down.
The abiding American dream
of liberty and justice for all.

Dr. King asked of God in 1964:
...grant that we will always reach out
For that which is high,
realizing that we are made for the stars,
created for the everlasting,
born for eternity.