



Repair the World mobilizes Jews and their communities to take action to pursue a just world, igniting a lifelong commitment to service. We believe service in support of social change is vital to a flourishing Jewish community and an inspired Jewish life.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Legacy

Dr. King is best known for his strategy of nonviolent protest for racial equality, and many draw inspiration from Dr. King's dream for a more diverse and equal America. It's often hard to capture the breadth, complexity, and nuance of MLK's contributions. Dr. King also understood the impact of working across communal lines in the push for one common goal: separately, attaining any significant progress would be a challenge; collectively, he and other civil rights activists could affect policies and influence change nationwide.



While Dr. King's message began as a peaceful protest; towards the end of his life, he became much more radical, staunchly advocating for anti-war and anti-poverty. Dr. King's leadership, and the works of many other civil rights leaders, contributed to the overall success of the civil rights movement in the mid-1900s. Dr. King's strength inspired and paved the way for numerous other's voices that are still with us today. As Dr. King influenced these leaders to serve, so shall those leaders' words inspire us to serve.

Framing

Based on the Jewish practice of *tzimtzum*, literally **contracting, a practice of stepping back, physically or metaphorically making space, as a way to self-assess in preparation for action towards *tikkun olam*, repairing the world.** We invite you to reflect on your service to understand how your actions align with the Jewish value of *na'aseh v'nishma*, action and learning. **In service, we make space to take action.**

- **What brought you to take action today?**
- **How do we assess the needs in our communities?**
- **In addition to your service today, what other action can you take to create a more just world?**
- **What else can you provide to support others access the resources they need?**



In a just world, individuals and communities have access to resources they need. This includes access to nourishing food, secure housing, meaningful education, as well as the opportunity to realize their full potential. Throughout history, civil rights activists and service providers have taken action against the inequitable distribution of power and resources based on identity, attempting to actualize this reality of a just world. On Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend, Black History Month, and throughout the year, we serve in support of access for communities of color and other marginalized groups.

Food Justice

Food Justice strives toward access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally-appropriate food for all.

According to the USDA more than 34 million people, including 9 million children are experiencing food insecurity in the United States.

“Something is wrong that we have to feed so many. Why should there be poverty with all of our science and technology? There is no deficit in human resources – it is a deficit in human will.” – **Coretta Scott King**

“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger.”– **Leviticus 19:9–10**

“Health is a human right, not a privilege to be purchased.”

– **Shirley Chisholm**

01

Why do you think with all of our advancements in science and technology, we are faced with a reality in which so many people experience food insecurity?

02

How can practicing making space, *tzimtzum* support food justice? How might service fill that space that is made?

03

What would a system look like if food access were a universal right?

- How can we as individuals and communities work towards making this a reality?
- Which other systems such as schools, workplaces and public transportation could support food access?
- Who could be responsible for promoting this change?

04

For those of us who are not farmers, and do not harvest our own produce, how can we align ourselves with the teaching from Leviticus?

Feeding America has statistics and infographics related to food insecurity on a national and community level.

Education Justice

Education Justice strives toward every student receiving what they need to develop their full potential.

[The American Council on Education](#) determined that over the past six years 51.5% of enrolled Black and Latino/e/x students earned an undergraduate degree, compared to 70% of white students.

“Every child deserves an education that guarantees the safety to learn in the comfort of one’s own skin.”

– **Dena Simmons, Ed. D.**

“Youths are passed through schools that don’t teach, then forced to search for jobs that don’t exist and finally left stranded in the street to stare at the glamorous lives advertised around them.” – **Huey P. Newton, co-founder Black Panthers**

“Schools are about more than what we know and what we can do. They are about who we are and what we must do to help others become what they might be. The world our children will inherit tomorrow is born in the schools we build today.”

– **Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks**

01 How do these quotes resonate with you based on your ideal educational system compared to the reality that you experienced?

02 Why do you think many students in our city do not have equitable access to an excellent education?

03 What immediate and long term steps need to be taken to create an equitable education system in our city? How can tzimtzum, making space, be practiced on a communal level in support of education?

[The National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\) Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates](#) search feature gives a breakdown of the local school-aged population that would directly benefit from your service. This portal allows you to pull extensive demographic data based on any school district across the country.

Housing Justice

Housing Justice strives toward everyone having access to safe, decent, affordable housing.

The [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#) determined that Black and Indigenous people are 2.8 times more likely to experience homelessness than white people.

“Housing is a human right. There can be no fairness or justice in a society in which some live in homelessness, or in the shadow of that risk, while others cannot even imagine it.”
- **Jordan Flaherty, Floodlines: Community and Resistance from Katrina to the Jena Six.**

“It is plain that we don't care about our poor people except to exploit them as cheap labor and victimize them through excessive rents and consumer prices.” - **Coretta Scott King**

“Jewish law demands that everyone have adequate and permanent housing. The parallel themes of homelessness and wandering pervade the Bible and Jewish history. In the first chapters of the book of Genesis, Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden. Abraham begins his relationship with God by leaving his native land, and Jacob and his sons leave their own home to go down to Egypt...It is no wonder, then, that Jewish law, halakhah, attempts to guarantee housing stability. Though powerless to grant the Jewish people a permanent home, halakhah can at least help to assure individual members a stable place to live.”- **Rabbi Jill Jacobs, Judaism and the Homeless**

01 What does a safe and decent home mean to you? What might a safe and decent home mean to the communities in which we live?

02 How does the practice of making space, *tzimtzum* when you don't have access to your own safe affordable housing?

03 How is housing justice a pathway to health, education, stability, economic opportunity, etc.?

[National Coalition for the Homeless](#) has statistics and infographics related to housing injustice, searchable based on community/location.

Carceral Justice

Carceral Justice addresses structural issues in criminal justice systems such as racial profiling, police brutality, overcriminalization, mass incarceration, and recidivism.

According to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Black people make up 38.4% of the total prison population, five times the rate of white Americans.

“Criminal justice” is what happens after a complicated series of events has gone bad. It is the end result of failure--the failure of a group of people that sometimes includes, but is never limited to, the accused person.” - **Paul Delano Butler**

“Racial segregation must be seen for what it is, and that is an evil system, a new form of slavery covered up with certain niceties of complexity.”

- **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

“If your neighbor is indebted to you, and must sell themselves to you, do not subject them to the treatment of a slave.”- **Leviticus 25:39**

01 What failures do you think Paul Delano Butler is referring to?

02 What changes do you think our communities need to make to address them? How might service and learning play a role in that change?

03 What role does access to resources and the practice of tzimtzum, making space, play in addressing carceral injustice?

04 How do you see this quote from Leviticus manifesting in modern day society, in our carceral systems and beyond?

[Vera Institute](#) provides incarceration trends, statistics, and infographics, both nationally and locally.

Environmental Justice

According to the EPA, environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

Black Americans reported the highest increase in childhood asthma (34%), as well as increased mortality rates from coastal flooding (11%) and extreme temperatures (40%) compared to the larger population.

"I never could have conceived of becoming a champion for climate change... But, I have had a change of heart. Climate change is a civil rights issue." - **Rev. Gerald Durley**

"To white people who care about maintaining a habitable planet, I need you to become actively anti-racist. I need you to understand that our racial inequality crisis is intertwined with our climate crisis. If we don't work on both, we will succeed at neither." - **Ayana Elizabeth Johnsen, Marine Biologist**

"When the first human was created, God took the human and led them round all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to: 'Look at My works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are! And all that I have created, it is for you. Pay attention that you do not corrupt and destroy My world: for there will be no one to repair it after you.'" - **Kohelet Rabbah 7:13**

01 Why do you think environmental injustice and climate change disproportionately affects communities of color?

02 How can we practice *tzimtzum*, making space, in an environmentally conscious way?

03 How does our service contribute towards the repair referenced in Kohelet Rabbah?

Tree Equity Score provides maps of tree density in your community. A map of tree cover in any city in the United States is too often a map of race and income.

Poverty

Poverty is usually measured as insufficient income or resources at the disposal of an individual, a family, or a household. Poverty entails more than lack of income or productive resources—namely, access to a sustainable livelihood.

Approximately fifteen percent (about 47.5 million) of US citizens are living in poverty right now. Black and Latinx individuals are twice as likely to experience poverty within their lifetime.

“If America does not use her vast resources of wealth to end poverty and make it possible for all of God’s children to have the basic necessities of life, she too will go to hell.”
– **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

“It is plain that we don’t care about our poor people except to exploit them as cheap labor and victimize them through excessive rents and consumer prices.”
– **Coretta Scott King**

“If a poor person comes and asks according to their need, and the giver cannot afford to give, the giver should give according to their ability.”
– **Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor 7:5**

01 Given the vast amount of wealth and resources our country has, why do you think so many people experience poverty?

02 How does your service support those experiencing poverty?

03 How does the practice of tzimtzum, making space, align with the Mishneh Torah’s approach to giving according to your ability?

[Search by on state and county for poverty statistics from on the U.S. census data..](#)