

STUDY SHEETS

FROM SERVICE TO ADVOCACY

Stamford, CT. 3/8/20

"If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when?"

Hillel, Ethics of the Fathers, 1:14

"What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God."

Micah 6:8

"Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may live."

Deut 16:20

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break off every yoke? It is to share your bread with the hungry, and to take the wretched poor into your home...then shall your light shine in darkness, and your gloom shall be like noonday."

Isaiah 58:6

"We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right."

Nelson Mandela

"We came because we realized that injustice in St. Augustine, as anywhere else, diminishes the humanity of each of us.... We came because we could not stay away.... We could not pass by the opportunity to achieve a moral goal by moral means.... We came because we know that, second only to silence, the greatest danger to man is loss of faith in man's capacity to act."

Rabbis in St. Augustine, FL 6/19/64

"Let us be dissatisfied until from every city hall justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

Martin Luther King 8/16/67

“The three key lessons of human rights are: that indifference is the incubator of injustice; that it’s not what you stand for, it’s what you stand up for; and that people must never forget how the world looks to the vulnerable.”

Rosalie Albella, Canadian Supreme Court Justice

“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human rights, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom.”

Nelson Mandela

“We are here to make a difference, to mend the fractures of the world, a day at a time, an act at a time, for as long as it takes to make it a place of justice and compassion where the lonely are not alone, the poor not without help; where the cry of the vulnerable is heeded and those who are wronged are heard.”

“Leadership begins with taking responsibility. At the heart of Judaism are three beliefs about leadership: We are free. We are responsible. And together we can change the world.”

Chief Rabbi Emeritus Lord Jonathan Sacks

“In a free society where terrible wrongs exist, some are guilty, but all are responsible.”

“Judaism takes the mind out of the narrowness of self-interest.”

“Over and above personal problems, there is an objective challenge to overcome inequity, injustice, helplessness, suffering, carelessness, oppression.”

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

“True compassion is more than flinging a coin at a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice that produces beggars needs restructuring.”

“A time comes when silence is betrayal.”

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King 4/4/67

“Every day you must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

“My silences had not protected me. Yours will not protect you.”

Audre Lord

“Learn to do good. Devote yourselves to justice and the wronged. Uphold the rights of the orphan; defend the cause of the widow.”

Isaiah, 1:17

“What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor but the silence of the bystander.”

“The greatest evil of all is our own indifference.”

“We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”

Elie Wiesel

“If a person of learning participates in public affairs and serves as judge or arbiter, they give stability to the land...But if they sit in their home and say to themselves, ‘What have the affairs of society to do with me? ... Why should I trouble myself with the people’s voices of protest? Let my soul dwell in peace!’—if one does this, they overthrow the world.”

Midrash Tanhuma, Mishpatim 2

“Neighbor is not a geographic concept. It is a moral concept. It means our collective responsibility for the preservation of man’s dignity and integrity.”

Rabbi Joachim Prinz

“It is not incumbent upon you to complete the work, but neither are you at liberty to desist from it.”

Pirkei Avot (Ethics of Our Ancestors)

“likelihood exists that negro problem will be like the weather. Everybody talks about it but nobody does anything about it...We forfeit the right to worship God as long as we continue to humiliate negroes.... I propose that you Mr. President declare state of moral emergency. A marshall plan for aid to negroes is becoming a necessity. The hour calls for moral grandeur and spiritual audacity.”

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, June, 1963

“As Jews, we bear a fundamental responsibility not only for our own moral, spiritual and material welfare, but for the moral, spiritual and material welfare of society at large. We are required by our

tradition to assure a just and peaceful world and to do so personally through acts of kindness as well as by advocating in the political arena for public policies that we believe reflect these values. We have a fundamental religious obligation to stand up for the rights of the oppressed and persecuted, whoever and wherever they may be, and to do so however we can.”

Rabbi Jacob J. Schacter, 2004

“But the highest form of life, in terms of evolutionary development, involves struggling for such abstractions as justice and decency. And always there has been a minority of human beings engaged in that kind of struggle—people who insist on being unrealistic, people who won’t give up when everything seems to indicate that they should. If you’re one of those people, it’s just something that you have to keep on doing....There’s so much that needs doing there, and, like everywhere else, it’s getting much harder to do.”

Dr. Kenneth Clark in The New Yorker, 1982

“I want to suggest that there are two levels on which one should act—the personal and the political. The personal level is the obligation to treat homeless people we come across as members of our community. Giving a panhandler a dollar or lunch is not going to fix the political problem; why is there homelessness in this affluent society? However, giving a homeless person a dollar while stopping to talk to him is an act that begins to erase the boundaries between the housed and the homeless. The simple act of giving money, a bottle of water, or a sandwich to a homeless person, and stopping for a minute to chat, affects the giver as much as the recipient. Contact has been made across the barrier that is supposed to divide between us and them. Face-to-face, I can now see and hear the need and the vulnerability of those who sleep on the streets of my city.

The second level is political action. In different cities, the tactics may be different. However, the goal must be to have enough affordable housing stock so that nobody has to live on the street....I am not arguing for a shelter bed. I am arguing that if we are to ever be able to call our cities places where righteousness dwells, we must work toward the possibility of housing for everybody...We cannot consider ourselves a righteous city when thousands of people live on the streets.

Rabbi Aryeh Cohen in Justice in the City