

It is a great honor to be speaking with you today, as we remember, and pay respects to a great man — Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. — who peacefully fought so that justice could be a living reality in our country.

Before I start I'd like to acknowledge that we are on the unceded land of the Ramaytush Ohlone people. May their ancestors' memories be both for a blessing and a revolution.

As I was preparing for this speech, I read a story about two rabbis who lived millennia ago. The story goes that there was a beautiful castle, but a stolen beam was at its foundation..

One rabbi, Shammai, argues that the whole palace must be taken down, because one cannot build something so beautiful on a lie.

The other rabbi, Hillel, says, “ not to destroy the beautiful castle but to repay the debt fully and completely compensate for the keystone role the stolen beam plays.

Despite the differences in these rabbis' views, they both acknowledge that something must be done to rectify the situation. We can't pretend that the stolen beam is not there. We must hold ourselves accountable and take part in the restorative justice that is needed. .

Justice is one of the core obligations of Judaism. Justice for the poor. Justice for the weak. Justice for everyone. .

From gun violence, climate change, and the assault on reproductive freedoms, to police brutality, homelessness, homophobia, and unending racism and other social ills, my generation is inheriting many challenges and injustices that stem from the original “stolen beams” of our country — the horrors of slavery and indigenous genocide.

So I call on everyone here: Make it your personal mission to change our government’s policies, make reparations to survivors, and shift our internal understandings of these actions from one of charitable paternalism, to the repayment of the debt on our national soul. This is justice.

Thank you very much