

Letter: Hatred Is Root of Evil

In dark times, we can find inspiration in the words of our Jewish sages and those of Martin Luther King Jr.

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(From left) Martin Luther King Jr., Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel march in Montgomery, Ala.

The following is excerpted from a letter Rabbi Ari Leubitz, the head of school at [Atlanta Jewish Academy](#), sent to the AJA community in mid-August.

Our school mission is to teach our children not to judge a book by its cover — and to be mensches who are inclusive and embrace the diversity that makes up our community. It is within that framework I share the following brief thought.

We have all been shaken by the recent horrific events in our world, as well as by the aftermath of these events over the past number of days. As Shabbat approaches, I ask that we each find ways to inspire each other to connect around our commitments to equality and to a shared humanity, and share the complete and unequivocal rejection of hate and neo-Nazi ideology.

This is also the time when we must remind ourselves that no matter the rhetoric that surrounds us, our sacred task as Jews is to remain anchored in our religious conviction, which believes that hatred of others on any grounds is truly the root of evil.

During trying times, we often look to our tradition for answers, comfort or support. I tend to look to the wisdom of our sages to guide me and help me gain the perspective that I can share with you.

“It was for this reason that man was first created as one person (Adam), to teach you that anyone who destroys a life is considered by Scripture to have destroyed an entire world; and anyone who saves a life is as if he saved an entire world. And also, to promote peace among the creations, that no man would say to his friend, ‘My ancestors are greater than yours.’ ” — *Mishna Sanhedrin 5:4*

In times of darkness, I reflect on words that Martin Luther King Jr. spoke: “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” We are all heading in the right direction and doing our part to bend toward justice. By growing and nurturing the children of AJA to be empathetic and inclusive mensches who celebrate diversity and place love mountains above hate, we are helping to bring light and hope into the world.

Wishing you and your family a peaceful Shabbat.

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