

Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman  
Martin Luther King Interfaith Service  
Mt. Zion Baptist Church  
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Ten days before Dr. King was murdered in Tennessee, he addressed a large group of rabbis in New York. Before he was introduced as the honored speaker, eight hundred rabbis stood up and sang in his honor, in Hebrew, “We shall overcome” – *Anu nitgaber*.

This story, told and retold in my community, left a profound mark on me. Singing *Anu nitgaber* was a genuine act of solidarity. It was a sincere gesture of respect, and a great moment of hope. The image of the rabbis standing with Dr. King inspired me to believe that we were all in it together. We could all fight for a better world together. We could work for a society where black children would “not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

But I no longer believe that we are all in it together.

We are not all in it together because black people and white people have vastly different experiences in our community. I don’t get followed in stores to make sure I’m not shoplifting. I don’t live in a decaying neighborhood with crumbling schools and few municipal resources. I don’t worry that the police will stop my white children for no reason. I don’t fear for my children’s safety on a daily basis. I don’t have family members in prison.

Black people and white people are not all in it together because our opportunities and experiences are worlds apart.

If we are to carry Dr. King’s legacy forward, then we must acknowledge that some of us experience great privilege while others experience great injustice.

If we are to carry Dr. King’s legacy forward, then we must talk about the face of racism today: mass incarceration, police violence, poverty wages, and the destruction of public education.

If we are to carry Dr. King’s legacy forward, then we must build a movement that addresses these issues.

If we are to carry Dr. King's legacy forward, then we must stand together. We must raise our voices together. We must pray together. And we must fight for justice together. *Ken yehi ratzon*. May it be God's will.