



Staying in the Struggle
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(Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times)

The Women's Marches in 2017 and 2018 were proud acts of defiance against the moral decay of our nation, and irrefutable evidence that a commitment to equality and justice is indeed shared by millions of people across the world. Many in our IKAR community participated in these marches, bringing our core values to the streets and joining a broad coalition working to catalyze positive change.

In the shadow of these powerful events, the implicit embrace of or even a willingness to tolerate age-old anti-Semitic tropes from some leaders of the Women's March has hurt and alienated our Jewish community. Insensitivities from our allies and friends have been particularly alarming in the context of the rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes over the past few years, most devastatingly manifest in the recent terror attack in Pittsburgh. We continue to affirm that anti-Semitism from the armed far right poses the greater physical threat to our people, but anti-Semitism from the left poses a very real psychic threat as that is where most Jews find our home. We need and expect more from our allies, particularly those leading efforts dedicated to love and justice.

There is no room for anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia or any sort of bigotry in a movement that aims to overcome hatred and injustice and to build a foundation of love and dignity for all. This is clear.

It is also clear that [it is vital for the Jewish community to stay in the struggle](#) for racial, economic and gender justice. Our liberation, as American Jews, is bound up with the liberation of all people, and we must not be deterred in our commitment to stand together against grave threats to democracy and human dignity. Abandoning the conversation will not only undermine efforts to work toward a more just country and world, but will also fail to help us achieve greater empathy and understanding from and toward one another.

We know that many in the Jewish community are working to discern whether they should participate in this year's March on January 19th. This year, [the Women's March Unity Principles](#) were written with the support and input of Jewish women, and it is by those principles that we stand. The leadership of the [Los Angeles Women's March](#), which has distanced itself from the national Women's March, has been very sensitive to concerns around anti-Semitism, including the marginalization of Jews of color and LGBTQ Jews. And, through honest and heartfelt dialogue over the last couple of months, we have seen the March's national leadership demonstrate a desire to learn and grow from this controversy.

It is for these reasons, and because the work remains more urgent than ever, that we urge you to stay in the conversation. Some IKARites will be heading downtown after Shabbat morning services. Others will be meeting at Pershing Square Metro station, corner of 5th and Hill Streets, at 8am, or at the George Washington statue in Grand Park, close to Hill St., at 11am.

Again, whether or not you participate in the March, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to the work of justice and liberation for all people in this country. This controversy has shown how much we all have to learn about the complex and intertwined issues of racism and anti-Semitism. We remain committed to showing up and building relationships rooted in a shared vision of what's possible in this country. And we believe strongly in the power of *tokheha* and *teshuvah*, the loving rebuke that calls us to speak honestly when we've been hurt, and the ability to learn and grow from even grave mistakes and misjudgments.

If you will be marching in Washington, DC [on January 19th](#), we encourage you to join our sisters Shifra Bronznick and Yavilah McCoy as [Jewish Women March for Justice](#). (You can read Shifra's recent op ed [here](#).)

With blessings-

Rabbi Sharon Brous, Melissa Balaban, Brooke Wirschafter