

**Rabbi Weiss delivered the invocation at the March on Washington 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for Jobs & Freedom, held Wednesday, August 28, 2013 at Cleveland Public Auditorium. Below are his remarks.**

It was 50 years ago that some 250,000 of our brothers and sisters – black and white, Christian, Jewish and all faiths, men and women, straight and gay – gathered on the Mall in Washington, DC. They came to demand payment on what Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. called a promissory note given by the founding fathers of this country, a promise that every American would be entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Reverend King said that day that America had defaulted on that note, and the 250,000 Americans gathered were there to demand payment, to demand justice, freedom and equality for all Americans regardless of race, ethnicity, creed, gender or orientation. The march toward freedom started at the Mall in 1963 and we have come very far in the last 50 years. We have received a partial payment of that check, but we have not received payment in full. We are here tonight to celebrate half a century of achievements in civil rights, to celebrate the strides that have been made in closing the gap of racial inequality. But we are also here to demand payment in full, to commit ourselves to work tirelessly without rest until we truly reach that day when in Reverend King's words we and our children will not be judged by the color of our skin but by the content of our character, that day when all will be equal before the law, equal in society.

And so we pray today: O Lord, give us the vision. Keep before our eyes the image of what our society could be, of what it should be, a nation that values, empowers and elevates each and every person. Give us the courage. The courage to carry out the difficult and necessary changes in the very structure of our society, in our laws, our courts, our schools, our workplaces and our streets, to move our men from prisons to employment, to lift up our children through quality education. And, O Lord, give us the love – yes, the love. Fill our hearts with pure, overwhelming unconditional love for our fellow human beings. Wipe from our hearts all hatred, all bigotry. Help us to see the divinity in each and every person. Give us the strength, O Lord, to march on until we reach that promised land of Dr. King's Beloved Community. And let us all say: Amen.