

Tzedek Seder: #BlackLivesMatter

By Becca Goldstein

**BLACK LIVES
MATTER**

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Introduction

Guidelines and Terms

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews United for Justice

Know that there is always more to learn and unlearn, more to discover about the world, our society, and ourselves.

Lean into discomfort. If you feel uncomfortable tonight at any moment, if something doesn't sit right with you, if you want to object - that's when to think more, have more conversations, seek to learn and stretch. Note those moments, and continue to explore them after this seder. This is what we call "productive discomfort."

If we turn aside, we are not just avoiding bad news, we are allowing our comfort to be more important than the pain of our fellow humans. This means that sometimes when our Black friends, family and community members come to us with their stories of marginalization and violence we are shocked, in disbelief, and doubt their truth because we've spent so long shielding ourselves. We can end up denying the truths of the people we love.

When we listen and learn from each other, we can become stronger without having to become numb. We can support our friends. We can truly be there for each other – and not bystanders.

Assume the best about each other and yourself. Give yourself and other people the opportunity to learn. But don't let things go. If you hear something in your conversations that doesn't feel right, say something. Challenge each other with compassion and love foremost in your minds, for the sake of all of us learning together and for the health of our community.

The division of humans into races is a social, cultural, scientific, economic, political and legal construct whose legacy will remain with us until we learn to constructively converse about bias, prejudice and discrimination. Most of us - regardless of color - are terrified to have this discussion. Our terror may be because these conversations profoundly disrupt our deepest ideas of who we are and how we see others.

In this haggadah we mostly use the term Black with a capital B, to honor the way many of our allies and Jewish brothers and sisters identify at this time. We also use the term African American when that is the preferred identity. African American primarily refers to Americans who are descended from enslaved Africans, and can also include other people of African heritage in the Americas.

We're using the term gentile to refer to people who aren't Jewish, to use a positive rather than negative definition.

People of Color is a general term that includes ethnic, racial, indigenous and cultural groups from the United States and around the world; including but not limited to East and South Asians, South and Central Americans, Arabs, Persians, and North African and Middle Eastern Jews (some but not all Sephardim and Mizrachim). The term "people of color" signifies that we are people first, and to define solidarity between marginalized racial groups by reclaiming the idea of "color" as a positive attribute. When we say Black and Brown, we mean primarily Black, Latin@, Arab, Persian, South Asian, and indigenous people. This is also a preferred term in common use in the progressive movement today.

This seder focuses primarily on racism targeting Black people because Black people continue to be primary representatives of the racial ills in America, including racial hierarchy. We recognize that race is one form of oppression that people face and that it intersects with other interconnected forms of oppression including xenophobia, sexism, ageism, classism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, ableism, and more. By focusing on fully liberating those most deeply affected by any form of oppression we ensure that all of us are liberated from its chains.

The current Black Lives Matter movement for liberation calls on us to dismantle this racial hierarchy. Our Jewish tradition also calls on us to pay attention to the lives of Jews of Color. After all, how can white-skinned Jews demand racial justice if we are not embracing our rich Jewish beauty, history, and diversity? This haggadah is one attempt to answer that call and to honor our history.

Introduction

#BlackLivesMatter in Houses of Faith

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Stosh Cotler, Bend the Arc



Zoe Cohen

If people of faith want to show the world that #BlackLivesMatter, we have to show that they matter within our churches, temples, mosques, and synagogues. We must lend our moral courage and ethical imagination to support this powerful social movement that has emerged from Black communities, but calls on all of us to act.

Our country is experiencing a groundswell of activism that is shining a spotlight on police brutality and the myriad other ways in which racism harms Black communities and other communities of color. This groundswell is being powered by a revitalized racial justice movement with young people of color and LGBT people of color at its center -- and it's giving new shape to what a transformed American society could look like. In this moment of profound change and possibility, people of faith -- in our full diversity -- must work harder to raise the voices and follow the lead of the many Black people and other people of color in our communities. For white people of faith, that means learning how to become more effective allies in the struggle against racism -- and that struggle starts within our own faith communities.

Transformation is on the rise. People of faith have direct experience with the power of transformation. Let's apply that wisdom to this moment and support these young people of color as they lead us to the promised land.

Only when every black life matters in America, will every life in America matter.

Introduction

Why A Racial Justice Seder?

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews United for Justice

“For Jewish support of #BlackLivesMatter to really make a difference, the discussion of racism, classism and sexism MUST come home. We need these discussions in our communities, our synagogues, our institutions, our homes as an analysis and challenge of our assumptions about our history as a people and the richness of our heritage.” – Sabrina Sojourner, #BlackLivesMatter Hanukkah Action, 2014

A traditional Passover seder is a festive, ritual-rich meal in which we remember the ancient Jewish story of liberation from slavery in Egypt. Over the centuries, thousands of different versions of the Passover haggadah, or “narrative,” have been written. Tonight, our haggadah will connect an ancient liberation story to liberation struggles that are still ongoing.

Jews have always been a multi-ethnic people, from the “mixed multitudes” who escaped Pharaoh in Egypt, to stand together at Sinai, to the incredible diversity of our many communities and traditions around the world historically and today. And whether you connect to the liberation story of the Exodus or the liberation story of Rabbi Heschel marching with Dr. King in Selma – and many, many stories in between – our people are called to work for justice everywhere.

Tonight we will lift up Black voices and Black stories both Jewish and Gentile. We will celebrate the resilience of the human spirit and take responsibility to lessen the daily demands on that spiritual strength. Tonight we will honor Black lives and Black voices by making an individual and communal commitment, as Jews, to racial justice.

Tonight we ask you to be vulnerable to each other. We ask you to wrestle with our responsibility to our sisters and brothers, because we cannot aid in the liberation of our friends from behind the walls that keep us separate.

Introduction

Befriend the Stranger

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Rori Picker Neiss, The Jewish Daily Forward

“You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Deuteronomy 10:19)

Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Luntschitz, the 16th century commentator from Prague known as the Kli Yakar, wrote that anyone who was never a stranger in his life cannot feel the pain of the stranger and does not suffer together with the stranger. Anyone who himself has been a stranger, though, knows in his very core the agony of the stranger, and would never allow anything which he himself finds hateful to happen to another.

It’s precisely because we have seen our own people dominate the news cycle for so long that we cannot stay silent. It’s because we have witnessed violence and bloodshed in our community that we cannot stay silent. It’s because we have heard our brothers and sisters blamed and defended, vilified and glorified, that we cannot stay silent regarding the tragic events taking place in Ferguson, in New York, in Ohio, in Wisconsin, and elsewhere throughout the country.

Seder Plate Symbols

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews United for Justice



Maror – The bitter herb reminds us of the bitterness inside all of us. Living in a racially discriminatory society means that racism infects our thoughts and actions, even if we don't want it to. We must call attention to the prejudiced ideas we all carry inside us in order to actively resist and uproot them.

Egg – The egg in its shell reminds us that we can choose how we identify ourselves, but we can't always choose how the world sees us—we're vulnerable to other people's assumptions about who we are inside (and out). When others assume things about us that don't jibe with our concept of ourselves, or when people cannot see an identify we hold close to our hearts, we feel dehumanized. Tonight we commit to celebrating everyone as they wish to identify.

Haroset – The haroset mixture reminds us of the interconnectedness, intersectionality, of all social forces. Racism exists alongside and within sexism, classism, anti-Semitism, disability oppression, homophobia, and

transphobia. We all may be privileged and also experience oppression. Haroset also reminds us of the sweetness of our diversity.

Beet / Shank bone – The blood that flows through us all. We celebrate our similarities while honoring the rich cultures and traditions of our many differences. Many ethnic communities are imagined, incorrectly, as homogenous cultures. For those of us who are white and Jewish, we remind ourselves that Jews come in all hues, from all corners of the world. For those of us who are Black, we know that Blackness is rooted in many different nationalities, ethnicities, and histories. We must celebrate our individuality, our cultures, and our commonalities. As the Black feminist writer and activist Audre Lourde said, “It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.”

Karpas – The green vegetable reminds us to help each other along as we learn and grow. Sometimes our friends and loved ones say or do things that are hurtful, even if they mean well. What if telling someone that they’ve said something racist was as easy as telling someone that they have parsley in their teeth? Let’s affirm our commitment to being more aware of what we and our loved ones say, and to being less afraid to lovingly tell each other when our words or actions have fallen short.

Matzah – A traditional seder table features three pieces of matzah, the “bread of affliction.” Tonight we use matzah to call attention to three types of racism, each of which must be broken and overturned.

- **Personal racism** – When people not targeted by racism have prejudiced thoughts or act out bigotry,
 - stereotypes, disrespect, demands to assimilate, or discrimination toward people who don’t share their race or ethnicity
- **Internalized racism** – When people targeted by racism internalize negative ideas about their own abilities and intrinsic worth - characterized by low self-esteem, struggles to assimilate, resignation, and hopelessness
- **Systemic or institutional racism** – When the laws, customs, or structures of society operate to exclude or limit substantial numbers of members of racial or ethnic groups from significant participation in major social institutions

Kadesh

Kadesh - Blessing Over The First Cup Of Wine

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews United for Justice

All Jewish celebrations, from holidays to weddings, include wine as a symbol of our joy. Traditionally, we drink four cups of wine which serve as signposts for our seder. Tonight, we will drink just one as we learn and take action.

We raise our cup to honesty about the present moment. Can we open up to the pain and anger in our country and our city tonight? Are we ready to be honest with ourselves? What are we bringing to the conversation tonight? What do we want to take away from this seder?

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree hagafen.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Karpas

Karpas

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews for Racial and Economic Justice



A small piece of onion, parsley, or boiled potato is dipped into saltwater and eaten (after reciting the blessing over vegetables). Dipping the karpas is a sign of luxury and freedom. The saltwater represents the tears of our ancestors in Mitzrayim (Egypt). This year may it also represent tears of Black parents and families mourning the loss of their Black youth at the hands of police brutality.

Maggid - Beginning

Avadim Hayinu

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews United for Justice

As all good term papers do, we start with the main idea:

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ הָיִינוּ. עַתָּה בְּנֵי חוֹרֵין

Avadim hayinu hayinu. Ata b'nei chorin.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. Now we are free.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and God took us from there with a strong hand and outstretched arm. Had God not brought our ancestors out of Egypt, then even today we and our children and our grandchildren would still be slaves. Even if we were all wise, knowledgeable scholars and Torah experts, we would still be obligated to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt.

More than just ritual observance, we are directed to feel in our own bodies what it might have been like to escape from slavery to freedom. The Exodus story asserts unapologetically that oppression and injustice can and must end, and it lays the foundation for the Jewish vision of a just society. This yearly reminder is a central tenet of Jewish history and culture. For many of our brothers and sisters, however, there is no need for a reminder of the story they carry. Many Black Americans feel the lasting effects of American slavery in their lives today. Whether they know their family's histories or whether, tragically, that history has been lost over the generations, the enslavement of African-heritage people in America needs no annual reminder.

We read responsively:

Reader: Avadim Hayinu – We were slaves in Egypt

All: We remember our histories, we acknowledge our pasts.

Reader: Atah b'nei horin – Now we are free people

All: How will we use our freedom?

For white-skinned Jews, it is important to remember that today in America we are racially privileged. That privilege, as well as our communal story, should propel us forward into the fight for the full equality and humanity of our Black brothers and sisters, especially when they call on us for solidarity.

– Four Children

The Four Adults

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews United for Justice

In the Passover haggadah, we tell the story of the four children: one who is wise, one who is wicked, one who is simple, and one who does not know how to ask questions. In reality, we know that no one child is fully wise, wicked, simple, or silent. At one point or another, every child – and for that matter, every adult – demonstrates each of these characteristics. Tonight, we use the example of the four children to illustrate the different ways that some of us attempt to grapple with racism in our society. As with the four children, many of us carry aspects of all four categories within ourselves. We shine a light on these pieces of ourselves as a way of acknowledging them, affirming that these responses are common, and strengthening ourselves to do better in confronting racism.

The eager adult asks: “When’s the next meeting?”

It is wonderful to show up to events, actions, trainings, and community spaces as an act of solidarity. And it’s even more wonderful to do so in a thoughtful way, undergirded by reflective, introspective work as well. Not only do we have to show up to public work, we have to make sure we’re also working on ourselves and within our own communities. Your family, your friends, your co-workers: close relationships and real conversations with them will help to build the just society we all envision.

The frustrated adult asks: “Why does this have to do with me? I’m not racist.”

Midrash Tanchuma teaches, we dare not ask: “What do the affairs of society have to do with me? Why should I trouble myself with the people’s voices of protest? Let my soul dwell in peace!” One who does this causes destruction in the world.” It is everyone’s responsibility to actively pursue justice. Inaction perpetuates the status quo. We must take responsibility for the ways in which we have failed to prevent acts of injustice both small and large.

Racism isn’t about good or bad people, moral or immoral singular acts. One

of the frightening aspects of growing up and living in a racist society is that we don't always get to choose even our own thoughts. From a young age, society sends us subtle, often-unnoticed messages about other people. Implicit biases are purposes of social and/or political correctness." Often these biases are directly in contradiction with our explicit beliefs. Our unconscious biases have real consequences in employment, housing, health care, policing, and other social institutions. Taking responsibility for those biases and making conscious efforts to undo them and mitigate their effects on our actions is an important first step for us all.

The skeptical adult asks, "Why is there so much anger right now? Wasn't the killing of Michael Brown just an isolated incident?"

The publicized killings of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, and too many more Black men and boys – as well as many Black women, girls, and trans women – have forced America to confront a horrifying and shameful piece of our society that has been with us for centuries. Police violence is something that many communities of color know all too intimately. Between 2006 and 2012, data show that white police officers killed black people nearly twice a week in the US. This data is almost certainly an undercount. Further, reports show that 18% of the Black people killed during those seven years were under age 21, compared to 8.7% of white people. The killing of Michael Brown, an unarmed teenager, in Ferguson Missouri, was not an isolated incident. Only a few weeks ago, the Department of Justice report found definitively that the Ferguson police department and court system had a documented history of racial bias of astounding proportions.

The anger we are hearing and talking about is not new. It's a justified outrage over the killing of people who look like our neighbors, our families, ourselves. Violence is the effect, not the cause, of racial oppression. We must make sure that specific acts of violence are not seen in isolation, allowing them to retreat from the news cycles into just a memory.

And as for the adult who doesn't know how to begin this conversation,

We empower them. Us. Each other. The problems are enormous and the conversations complicated. But we remember the midrash, or Rabbinic story, of Nachshon. When the Israelites fled Egypt, and came to the Red Sea, the

people cried out in despair as Pharaoh's army closed in on them. But Nachshon, with full faith, did not wait. He waded into the Sea until the water came up to his nose. Then, and only then, the Sea parted. Sometimes we must wade in – further than we ever thought possible or safe – before change is possible. As we read in Pirkei Avot, "It is not your responsibility to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it." So take a step into the sea – it's time.

-- Four Children

The Four Questions

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews United for Justice, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice



by Kristen Zimmerman

The formal telling of the story of Passover is framed as a discussion with lots of questions and answers. The tradition that the youngest person asks the questions reflects the centrality of involving everyone in the seder. The rabbis who created the set format for the seder gave us the Four Questions to help break the ice in case no one had their own questions.

The questions we ask at a seder set in motion the telling of the story. The usual four questions begin with “Mah nishtanah halayla hazeh? – Why is this night different from all other nights?” But Rabbinic commentary tells us that any genuine question can serve the same purpose.

Tonight, we burn with questions. We collectively acknowledge that we are in a moment of crisis, that we have actively or passively contributed to this crisis, and that we must treat this moment with urgency. In order to do this thoughtfully, we must ask ourselves (at least) four questions:

1. Why is racism a Jewish issue?
2. How is police brutality connected to racism?
3. Why on this night when we remember the oppression and resistance of Jews should we also think about the lives of people of color?
4. I don't want to accept that racism will always be present in our society.

How can we fight racism in our own communities and at AU?

-- Four Children

1st Question: Why is Racism A Jewish Issue?

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews United for Justice

American Jews come in all different skin colors, socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and ways of practicing Judaism and being Jewish. Regardless of color or country, Jews have been oppressed and discriminated against throughout history. That history of oppression and exclusion, some of it very recent, is embedded in our culture and our hearts. But our story is also complicated, a winding tale of oppression and freedom, of struggle and triumph. How we respond to that story is critical. Rather than isolating ourselves out of continued fear, we must use our history to cultivate empathy and open our hearts to stand in solidarity with people who are oppressed and discriminated against in our society today.

Discrimination is also an issue within the Jewish community. Although Jews of color make up 10-20% of American Jews and an even higher proportion of Jews worldwide, European-descended Jews dominate the political, cultural, and economic landscape of Jewry. For white-skinned Jews in America, our whiteness presents a paradox. We have experienced anti-Semitism, a form of oppression that is different from but entwined with racism. We know the isolation and alienation of living in a Christian-dominated culture that demands that we assimilate to fit in, and we are only a generation removed from restricted neighborhoods and Jewish quotas at universities and professional firms. But our experience of anti-Jewish oppression has not always led us to be fierce and loving allies to our Jewish brothers and sisters of color. Too often, Jews of color are rendered either invisible or "other" in Jewish communities, questioned, scrutinized, and asked to prove their Jewishness, their knowledge, or their right to be present.

We can, and must, do better.

-- Four Children

2nd Question: How Is Police Brutality Connected To Racism?

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews United for Justice

The shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed young Black man of 18, in Ferguson, MO on August 9, 2014, by white police officer Darren Wilson, touched off a national outcry of grief and protest. The protestors in Ferguson crying out for justice and accountability were nightly met in the streets with riot police driving armored vehicles and shooting tear gas. That protest movement intensified when a grand jury declined to indict Wilson and spread with additional news of a New York grand jury that declined to indict white officers who choked Eric Garner, a 43-year-old Black man in Staten Island, to death – captured in chilling detail on video.

These events are not isolated. As more and more stories came to light, journalists and activists have realized that we do not even have a count of all the extrajudicial police killings in this country. The killings follow a pattern: racist attitudes and assumptions create a perception of fear or threat that leads to heightened tension, faster escalations, and a lack of restraint when it comes to pointing a gun at a person of color and pulling the trigger. Ramarley Graham. Tamir Rice. John Crawford III. Aiyana Stanley Jones. Akai Gurley. Rekia Boyd. Too many more.

Police violence targeting Black people is only possible because of the underlying history of centuries of dehumanization of Black people.

Too often, our police look like a heavily armed militia, ready to control and subdue, rather than government employees charged with protecting civilians. DC, too, uses militarized policing. Jump-out squads, long used by the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), are groups of plainclothes police in unmarked cars who target Black people and communities, jumping out to question and detain young men with no provocation or probable cause, weapons already drawn. These are dangerous tactics that frighten young people, alienate the communities targeted, and sometimes end tragically, fatally.

In February, DC Councilmember David Grosso said, “The jump-out tactic is

the antithesis to the community policing model that MPD promotes. Not only does it immediately escalate the tension between an individual and the police, but it makes our residents fearful of doing everyday things like walking down the street or sitting on the stoop to talk with friends.”

The Department of Justice report states in no uncertain terms that the Ferguson Police Department’s “law enforcement practices violate the law and undermine community trust, especially among African Americans.” Yet Darren Wilson, and many other police shooters, have faced no charges. In a democratic society, the police represent us all and must protect all our communities. And they must be held accountable when they don’t.

-- Four Children

3rd Question: Why on this Night When we Remember the Oppression of Jews Should We Think About the Lives of People of Color?

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews for Racial and Economic Justice

Because many Jews are people of color. Because racism is a Jewish issue. Because our liberation is connected. White Ashkenazi Jews have a rich history but are only a part of the Jewish story. Mizrahi & Sephardi Jews; Yemeni Jews; Ethiopian Jews; Jews who trace their heritage to the Dominican Republic, to Cuba & Mexico; to Guyana & Trinidad; descendants of enslaved Africans whose ancestors converted or whose parents intermarried. Jews of color are diverse, multihued and proud of it — proud of our Jewishness and proud of our Blackness. But though our lives are joyous and full, racism forces us down a narrow, treacherous path. On the one hand we experience the same oppression that afflicts all people of color in America — racism targets us, our family members, and our friends. On the other hand, the very community that we would turn to for belonging and solidarity — our Jewish community — often doesn't acknowledge our experience.

Jews of color cannot choose to ignore the experiences of people of color everywhere, anymore than we would ignore our Jewishness. We must fully inhabit both communities and we need all Jews to stand with us, forcefully and actively opposing racism and police violence. What our neighbors in communities of color are asking — what the Jews of color in our own communities need from their fellow Jews — is that we push past the comfortable and move to action. In the streets, in our synagogues and homes, with our voices, our bodies, our money and resources, with our imaginations. In doing so we must center the voices and the leadership of Jews of color and other communities of color, while forming deep partnerships and long-term commitments to fight for lasting change.

-- Four Children

4th Question: How Can We Fight Racism In Our Own Communities?

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews United for Justice



Anya Ulinich

For people of color, this is a question about fighting for our own survival. For white people, this is a question about how we can be there for people who are targeted by racism – what some of us call being an ally.

An ally is a person who wants to fight for the equality of a marginalized group that they're not a part of. Acting as an ally means that we have a responsibility and an obligation to stand with people who are oppressed when they call for their own liberation. That we are ready to listen and learn rather than talk and lead. That we lift up the voices and actions of people of color.

For some people here tonight, this is the first time we're talking about racism this way. Remember the words of Ricardo Levins Morales: "Whites invest too much energy worrying about getting it right; about not slipping up and revealing their racial socialization; about saying the right things and knowing when to say nothing. It's not about that. It's about putting your shoulder to the wheel of history." The most important thing is not to be afraid.

For others who are here, this is one of many times we've set ourselves to learn from our Black brothers and sisters. Some steps to continue our work as allies, as taught by Omolara Williams McCallister and Franchesca Ramsey:

1) **Understand your privilege.** Think critically and creatively about how your

identities and experiences affect the way that you view and interact with others, particularly those who do not share your privilege.

2) Listen, and do your homework. Educate yourself, don't make people of color prove their point of view is real. Listen first and always. Ask informed questions of someone who has invited you into dialogue, someone who has accepted your invitation to dialogue.

3) Speak up, but not over. Use your voice and privilege to educate others, but not to speak over the community you're trying to support or take credit for things they are already saying.

4) Be open to making mistakes. It takes time to learn. Be willing to hear criticism and to apologize. It's not just about your intent, but about your impact. Act differently in the future.

5) Respect and protect boundaries that Black people and other people of color create. Seek emotional support and energy from other allies, not from the people you're seeking to ally to. Black folks often do not have the opportunity to gather and talk through our issues and differences amongst ourselves – and shouldn't have to support and reassure you.

6) Wake up every day and choose to keep doing this work. One of the functions of your privilege is that you could walk away from this struggle. Stay in it. Stick with it.

7) Seek real, whole, human relationships with people of color. Racism keeps us separate - the foundation and the goal of solidarity is to have each other's backs so fully that we are inseparable and can do anything we set our minds to, together.

– Ten Plagues

Ten Plagues - Ten Lives Lost

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews United for Justice



Erin Zipper, Colorlines 2014

To persuade Pharaoh to let the Hebrew slaves go free, God brought ten plagues on the people of Egypt. In a traditional seder, we remove a drop of wine or juice from our glasses as we name each ancient plague, symbolizing that even as we celebrate our liberation, our joy is reduced by the suffering of the Egyptians. Tonight we remove a drop from our full cups after we read the names of ten Black lives lost to police violence:

Sean Bell

Kendrek McDade

Walter Scott

Rekia Boyd

Eric Garner

John Crawford III

Kimani Grey

Aiyana Stanley Jones

Tamir Rice

Michael Brown

Koreich

Hillel Sandwich

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Catalyst Project

Eating a sandwich of matzah and bitter herb | *koreich* | כּוֹרֵיךְ

When the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the biggest ritual of them all was eating the lamb offered as the Passover sacrifice. The great sage Hillel would put the meat in a sandwich made of matzah, along with some of the bitter herbs. While we do not make sacrifices any more, we honor this custom by eating a sandwich of matzah, charoset, and bitter herbs.

It was Rabbi Hillel who began making koreich, so as to fulfill the words of the Torah "They shall eat it (the Pesach offering) with matzot and marror" (Numbers 9:11). Rabbi Hillel is also famous for his tzedek (justice) mindset, which led him to ask "If I am not for myself who is for me? And being for my own self, what am 'I'? And if not now, when?"

We each need to find action steps, ways to better translate our commitments into effective action. What are some of the ways folks feel they can most sustainably translate our anger, confusion, and fear into effective action?

Bareich

Elijah's Cup

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews United for Justice

And God delivered us from Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. (Deuteronomy 26:8)

There is a custom to fill a cup of wine for Elijah, the prophet whose appearance is said to foreshadow an era of true peace and justice. We place this cup on the table and open the doors of our homes, symbolically inviting in that vision. But we don't need to wait for Elijah's appearance to stand with Black people - and all people of color – fighting for liberation. We will use our hands and our arms to win this fight. We are the people we've been waiting for. Let's stretch our own arms out toward justice. Let's bring Elijah by being God's hand in the world.

Hallel

Lo Dayenu

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Jews for Racial and Economic Justice

Singing Dayenu is a 1000-year old Passover tradition. The 15-stanza poem thanks God for 15 blessings bestowed upon the Jews in the Exodus. Had God only parted the seas for us, “It would have been enough” we say for each miracle or divine act, thus humbly appreciating the immensity of the gifts. KB Frazier’s reworking of the poem addresses us, rather than God. It calls us to greater action for justice, saying “lo dayenu” (it would not have been enough) in recognition of the work still unfinished.

1. If we had sparked a human rights revolution that would unite people all over the world and not followed our present day Nachshons as they help us part the sea of white supremacy and institutional racism – Lo Dayenu
2. If we had followed Nachshons like the youth leaders in Ferguson and not heeded the words they spoke from Black Liberation Leader Assata Shakur: It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains – Lo Dayenu
3. If we had learned and chanted the words from Assata Shakur and not protested violence by militarized police – Lo Dayenu
4. If we had protested police use of tear gas, rubber bullets, pepper spray and rifles pointed at protesters and forgotten that we are all b’tselem elohim, created in God’s image – Lo Dayenu
5. If we had remembered that we are all created in God’s image and not affirmed Black Lives Matter – Lo Dayenu
6. If we had chanted and cried out that Black Lives Matter and not remembered Rekia Boyd, Alyanna Jones, Shantel Davis, Yvette Smith and Tyisha Miller, Black women and girls also killed by police – Lo Dayenu
7. If we had marched for those killed, chanting Hands up Don’t shoot and not recalled the words of Eicha: Lift of thy hands toward Hashem for the life of

the thy young children, that faint for hunger at the head of every street. – Lo Dayenu

8. If we had recalled the words of Eicha and not called to attention the school to prison pipeline and the mass incarceration of Black and brown people – Lo Dayenu

9. If we had called attention to the “new Jim Crow” system – and did not truly sh’ma (listen) – Lo Dayenu

10. If we had truly listened to the stories, pain and triumphs of our brothers and sisters of color without feeling the need to correct, erase or discredit them and did not recognize the Pharaohs of this generation – Lo Dayenu

11. If we had worked to dismantle the reigns of today’s Pharaohs and had not joined the new civil rights movement – Lo Dayenu

12. If we had marched, chanted, listened, learned and engaged in this new civil rights movement and not realized that this story is our story, including our people and requiring our full participation – Lo Dayenu

13. If we had concluded that our work is not done, that the story is still being written, that now is still the moment to be involved and that we haven’t yet brought our gifts and talents to the Black Lives Matter movement – Lo Dayenu

While this is not the first instance of state violence against Black people or the first human rights movement, it is indeed OUR time to step up and make a difference. We must work together to progress from Lo Dayenu to Dayenu in the coming years.

Hallel

Go Down Moses

Contributed by [Becca Goldstein](#)

Source: Saul Kaye

This song is considered an African American Spiritual song which has been sung by every great gospel and blues artist you can think of, most notably Louis Armstrong. This song established the bond between the Jewish slavery Experience and the African Slave experience as this song was written communally and sung by slaves in the South who felt a kinship between their plight and that of the Jewish Slaves in Egypt.

“Go Down, Moses” is said to have been sung by abolitionists to signal escape or rebellion. The lyrics use biblical imagery expressing the desire for a release from bondage. The song is marked by its strong tone of determination in the struggle for freedom. To this day, “Go Down, Moses” has remained popular and is performed by gospel singers throughout the world.

When Israel was in Egypt's land

Let my people go.

Oppressed so hard they could not stand,

Let my people go.

(Chorus x2)

Go down, Moses,

Way down in Egypt land.

Tell ol' Pharaoh,

Let my people go.

