

NO ONE IS FREE UNTIL WE ARE ALL FREE.

ATTRIBUTED TO AFRICAN-AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER,
REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. (1929-1968).

UNTIL WE ARE ALL FREE, WE ARE NONE OF US FREE.

AMERICAN SEPHARDI JEWISH POET, EMMA LAZARUS (1849-1887).

IT'S HELL IN MISSISSIPPI. AND YOU GOT TO REALIZE
THAT NOBODY CARES. I'M BLACK. YOU'RE WHITE.
IF YOU'RE GOING DOWN THERE, YOU'RE GOING
TO BE TREATED WORSE THAN BLACK.
BECAUSE YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE FREE. BUT I SAY

"NO ONE IS FREE UNTIL EVERYONE IS."

AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST & SNCC MEMBER,
JIMMY TRAVIS, (1942-2009)
AFTER BEING SHOT IN GREENWOOD, MS IN 1963.

SOLIDARITY

14th Annual **LABOR SEDER**, JEWS UNITED FOR JUSTICE
ADAS ISRAEL CONGREGATION, MARCH 22, 2015, WASHINGTON, D.C.

WHITES FIGHTING RACISM: WHAT IT'S ABOUT

By Ricardo Levins Morales, Puerto Rican and Jewish artist, healer, and troublemaker

White people are taught that racism is a personal attribute, an attitude, maybe a set of habits. Anti-racist 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; about undermining the structural supports of a system of control that grinds us under, that keeps us divided even against ourselves and that extracts wealth, power and life from our communities like an oil company sucks it from the earth.

The names of the euro-descended anti-racist warriors we remember – John Brown, Anne Braden, Myles Horton – are not those of people who did it right. They are of people who never gave up. They kept their eyes on the prize – not on their anti-racism grade point average.

This will also be the measure of your work. Be there. No one knows how to raise a child but we do it anyway. We don't get it right. The essential thing is that we don't give up and walk away. Don't get me wrong. It is important to learn and improve and become wise in the ways of struggle – or of parenting. But that comes with time. It comes after the idea of not being in the struggle no longer seems like an option.

One more thing. You may not get the validation you hunger for. Stepping outside of the smoke and mirrors of racial privilege is hard, but so is living within the electrified fences of racial oppression – and no one gets cookies for that. The thing is that when you help put out a fire, the people whose home was in flames may be too upset to thank and praise you – especially when you look a lot like the folks who set the fire. That's OK. This is about something so much bigger than that.

There are things in life we don't get to do right. But we do get to do them.

SONG 🎵

HINEI MAH TOV (FROM PSALMS 133:1)

How good and pleasant it is
For brothers and sisters to sit
together in unity!

הִנֵּה מַה־טוֹב וּמַה־נָּעִים
שֹׁכֵת אֶחָיִם גַּם־יַחַד:

*Hinei mah tov umah na'im
shevet achim gam yachad.*

*Hinei mah tov umah na'im
shevet achayot gam yachad.*

MIRIAM'S CUP

Miriam's cup, filled with water, represents the spring of life-giving water that followed the prophetess Miriam and the Israelites as they fled into the desert. This cup today honors the life-giving leadership of women and countless acts of generosity, care, and bravery by women. Our bodies are about 60% water – how many of our leaders are women?

At this seder we especially honor **Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Cullors**, queer women of color, who gave the #BlackLivesMatter movement its name and continue to shape a powerful vision of Black liberation.

BLACK LIVES MATTER is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks' contributions to this society, our humanity, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.

- Alicia Garza

read more:

<http://blacklivesmatter.com/a-herstory-of-the-blacklivesmatter-movement/>

WHY A LABOR SEDER? WHY RACIAL 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 seder¹ 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 hear from our friends, family, neighbors, colleagues, and allies who still face the Pharaohs of discrimination, oppression, and marginalization here at home. 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.

As we begin this seder, we honor the indigenous people of this part of the world. Before European colonization and the creation of the District of Columbia, this land was Piscataway land. The Piscataway people, which includes several Algonquian-speaking tribes, have lived along the Potomac River since 1300 CE. One group, named the Nacotchtank, also gives their name to the Anacostia River, and lived within the borders of the modern District. Decimated by imported diseases and driven from their homes by English settler and intertribal warfare, by the time of the American Revolution the surviving Piscataway people moved north, ultimately to Ontario. A small group of Piscataway families continued to live in their Maryland homeland, and intermarried with European indentured servants and free or enslaved Africans. Classified by the United States census as “free people of color” or “free Negroes” they were later subject to Jim Crow segregation policies. The state of Maryland “recognized” the Piscataway Conoy Tribe and the Piscataway Indian Nation in 2012. Neither is federally recognized.

Anya Ulinich



¹ Hebrew terms are defined in the glossary on page 24.

GUIDELINES

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."

You might feel uncomfortable hearing the stories of Black Jews and gentiles who have been afflicted with pain and violence due to their race. But 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 them 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.

RACIALLY SPEAKING

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.

SHEHECHEYANU

The *Shehecheyanu* blessing gives thanks for the arrival of any momentous time, often a holiday or a new beginning. This year, we recite the *Shehecheyanu* at a time of momentous tumult and pain. We grieve the killings of Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Raphael Briscoe, and far too many more Black and brown men and women, boys and girls. We stand with our brothers and sisters protesting in the streets and in the halls of power seeking to turn the tide of police brutality and to redress the emotional, economic, and physical violence done to Black and brown people and communities by centuries of systemic racism.

None of us asked to be born into a racist society. But we all inherit the legacy of the people who came before us – their mistakes and their cruelty, their suffering, their striving to give us better lives, their struggle for justice, and most importantly their love. It is the sum of everyone and everything that came before us that brings us to this moment.

And this moment, while full of pain, is also ripe with possibility. Tonight we are grateful for the opportunity to gather in a time of momentum for racial justice.



ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם שְׁהַיְמָנוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.
Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu vekiyanu vehigianu lazeman hazeh.

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe,
who has given us life, and kept us strong, and brought us to this time.

BLESSING OVER THE FIRST CUP OF WINE

Fill the first cup of wine or juice.

It is traditional to drink four cups of wine during a seder. Tonight, we will drink four cups together as we learn and take action, and those cups will provide the signposts for our seder.

We raise this first cup in **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?

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.
Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe, Creator of the
fruit of the vine.

We drink the first cup.



The ability to acknowledge blind spots can emerge only as we expand our concern about politics of domination and our capacity to care about the oppression and exploitation of others.

—bell hooks, *Love As The Practice of Freedom*, 2006

As Jews, we tell the story of *yetziat mitzrayim*, the Exodus from Egypt, to remind ourselves annually that our people were enslaved in a land not our own. The classical Ashkenazi haggadah text goes even further. It declares that:

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חֵיב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם.
Be'chol dor va'dor chayav adam lirot et atzmo ke'ilu hu yatzah miMitzrayim²

"In every generation, we are obligated to see ourselves as though we **personally** came out of 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.

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.

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? We have a responsibility to fight for justice.



If your own suffering does not serve to unite you with the suffering of others, if your own imprisonment does not join you with others in prison, if you in your smallness remain alone, then your pain will have been for naught.

—*Love and Justice in Times of War Haggadah*

The Israelites are not, after all, magically transported to the promised land; they are not carried on the "eagle's wings" of Exodus 19; they must march to get there, and the march is full of difficulties, crises, struggles, all realistically presented, as if to invite human as well as divine resolution.

—Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*

SEDER PLATE SYMBOLS



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,³ 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. Tonight's haroset is inspired by our speaker Michael W. Twitty : “molasses and pecans, to represent the gifts of the South despite its horrors in our history.”

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.”



Seeds – We add seeds to the seder plate to symbolize the potential for justice. We honor those who came before us and who sowed the seeds of justice, helping many flowers bloom. We also commit tonight to helping nurture the seeds of the current movement for Black liberation, and celebrating the successes as they come. We also acknowledge that we may never see all the flowers we fought to plant in conversations with our communities, in fighting for new legislation or policies, and in each step we take. But we sow seeds still. “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice,” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said. We know it will bend – but only if we bend it.



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 piece 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*

Feel free to eat some matzah and ritual foods as the seder continues.

3 The term “intersectionality” was first used by Professor Kimberle Crenshaw, a professor of law at UCLA and Columbia, to describe the interactions between different types of privilege and oppression.

BLESSING OVER THE SECOND CUP OF WINE

Fill the second cup of wine or juice.

We raise this second cup in **Openness**.

Some of what we hear tonight may feel difficult for some of us to process, but we reaffirm our **openness** to staying in this moment and learning from others around us.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of
the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the
vine.

We drink the second cup.



by Kristen Zimmerman

THE FOUR 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 is racism an economic justice issue?**
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?**

We'll hear the answer to the first question now and from our first speaker.

1ST QUESTION: WHY IS RACISM A JEWISH ISSUE?

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.⁴ 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.

FIRST SPEAKER

Michael W. Twitty

Zoe Cohen



I need for my fellow Jewish brothers and sisters to realize that my children will have to navigate institutionalized racism, whether it's on the streets or in the workplace, and to act as their allies... I need to know that my family has the full backing of the Jewish community in dealing with racism, and the only way that's going to happen is if everyone who identifies with being Jewish recognizes we're a multiracial community.”

—Yavilah McCoy, African American Jew, founder of **Ayecha**, a nonprofit organization providing educational resources for Jewish Diversity and advocacy for Jews of Color in the United States

Resources for American Jews of Color and their allies:

Be'chol Lashon (In Every Tongue) grows and strengthens the Jewish people through ethnic, cultural, and racial inclusiveness.
bechollashon.org

Jewish Multiracial Network advances Jewish diversity through empowerment and community building with Jews of Color and Jewish multiracial families.
jewishmultiracialnetwork.org

THE FOUR ADULTS

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.

“In a free society where terrible wrongs exist, some are guilty, but all are responsible.”

—Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

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 “the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual’s awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the 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.⁵ 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.⁶ Further, reports show that 18% of the Black people

5 Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/2014-implicit-bias.pdf>

6 *Exactly How Often Do Police Shoot Unarmed Black Men?* <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/08/police-shootings-michael-brown-ferguson-black-men>

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.

TABLE DISCUSSION

Please read the text below out loud in groups of 2-3 and use the accompanying questions to guide a discussion with your partner(s).

We are all here because we want to be more compassionate and conscious people. We live in a society that perpetuates harmful stereotypes, which are often expressed in our behavior even when we don't realize or intend it.

In 1970, psychiatrist and Harvard University professor Dr. Chester M. Pierce coined the word **microaggression** to describe some dismissive or insulting expressions of stereotypes.⁷ Columbia University psychology professor Dr. Derald Wing Sue defines racial microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative...slights and insults toward people of color."⁸

People experience microaggressions based on many different identities. Here are a few examples:

Gender-based—expressing surprise that a woman who's a mother has a job, or over-explaining something to a woman as if she isn't capable of understanding complex ideas.

Racial—"You're not really Black, are you?" or "I don't see color!" or holding a purse or wallet more closely while standing near a Black person. In particular, we want to lift up a frequent experience of Jews of color: Asking a person of color at synagogue, "How are you Jewish?" or "Were you born Jewish or did you convert?" implies that Jews of color have more to explain about their identity than Jews of European descent.

Homophobic—asking a woman if she has a husband/boyfriend (i.e. assuming she is interested in men), or asking whether an LGBTQ person has ever "tried" a hetero partner or relationship.

7 Derald Wing Sue (2010). *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*.

8 Derald Wing Sue et. al. (2007), "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice," <http://www.consumerstar.org/resources/pdf/RacialMicroaggressions.pdf>

Anti-Semitic—telling a Jewish person that they do or don't "look Jewish," or assuming that Jews have a lot of money or know a lot about money.

An extremely common microaggression, in general, is telling anyone that they are being **too sensitive** about their experiences.

These subtle acts of discrimination reinforce people's feelings of being marginal, unwelcome, inferior, abnormal, untrustworthy, or in need of proving their worth. The cumulative detrimental effects of even minor slights are very real: "the burden of vigilance drains and saps psychological and spiritual energies of targets and contributes to chronic fatigue and a feeling of racial frustration and anger."⁹

When someone experiences a microaggression, they might feel that something's off without knowing what happened or how to respond. Paradoxically, the more subtle the microaggression, the harder it is to interrupt. Overt displays of bias, like racial slurs, are easier to catch and to correct. A person who has engaged in a microaggression is probably unaware that anything has happened, and may get defensive or hesitate to acknowledge their mistake.

The point here is not that people who've experienced oppression are fragile – quite the opposite. Humans are resilient and even more so when we've had to struggle and fight for ourselves. Many questions or actions might be microaggressive in one situation (asking questions to a stranger) and totally appropriate in another (a deep conversation with a friend).

But we owe it to each other to notice when we make mistakes, take responsibility for harm we've caused, and learn to do better. Otherwise we are asking our brothers and sisters to bear the burden of our unconscious bias – and colluding with prejudice.

We're all works in progress – and we all make mistakes, especially when we're talking about race and racism. That's okay – it's better to dive in and try than to stay silent and afraid.

Read the questions below and discuss.

1. What microaggressions have you experienced, witnessed, or engaged in?
2. How can you combat anti-Black microaggression?
Is there anything you want to practice?

If you don't think the term "microaggression" accurately describes these experiences, focus on the experiences themselves and not on the terminology. But remember that the term is intentionally sharp; it's meant to teach that "micro" actions can be "aggressive" in their effect.

When you make a mistake or witness a microaggression:

Acknowledge what's happened. Apologize sincerely and think about what you need to learn or practice in order not to make this mistake again.

If it wasn't you who made a mistake, try to call attention to the problem with compassion: "that didn't sound right to me, because you were implying that..."

If you're a bystander, make sure that the person targeted feels seen and supported, and that the person who messed up corrects their mistake.

9 Derald Wing Sue, "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life," <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201010/racial-microaggressions-in-everyday-life>

SONG 🎵

The whole entire world

is a very narrow bridge (3x)
The whole entire world
is a very narrow bridge (2x)

And the main thing to recall
is not to be afraid, not to be afraid at all
And the main thing to recall
is not to be afraid at all.

כָּל הָעוֹלָם כּוֹל
גֶּשֶׁר צָר מְאֹד
וְהַעֲיָקָר
לֹא לִפְחֹד כָּלֵל

Kol Ha'olam kulo

Gesher Tsar me'od (3x)
Kol Ha'olam kulo
Gesher Tsar me'od (2x)

Veha'ikar - veha'ikar
Lo lefached - lo lefached klal.
Veha'ikar - veha'ikar
lo lefached klal.

BLESSING OVER THE THIRD CUP OF WINE

Fill the third cup of wine or juice.

We raise this third cup in **Humility**.

We strive to remember the actions of the past in our pursuit of a better, more equitable future for all. What else might **Humility** mean tonight?

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

We drink the third cup.



Part of my familized ethnic heritage was the belief that Jews were smart and that our success was the result of our own efforts and abilities, reinforced by a culture that valued sticking together, hard work, education and deferred gratification. Today, this belief in a Jewish version of Horatio Alger has become an entry point for racism by some mainstream Jewish organizations against African Americans especially, and for their opposition to affirmative action for people of color.

—Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Become White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (1998)

2ND QUESTION: HOW IS POLICE BRUTALITY CONNECTED TO RACISM?

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.¹⁰

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.”¹¹ 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.

We remember **Raphael Briscoe**, an 18-year-old young man who killed by a jump-out squad in 2011. He was followed by an unmarked police car full of plainclothes officers and, scared, he ran away from the car and an officer shot him in the back. Police Chief Cathy Lanier claimed that Raphael had a gun, which later turned out to be a BB gun. Raphael was never suspected of a crime. A scared teenager was running from an unmarked car full of white men brandishing deadly weapons. The officer who killed Raphael Briscoe was found not guilty of murder.



SECOND SPEAKER

Reverend Carolyn L. Boyd

¹⁰ <http://time.com/3016326/eric-garner-video-police-chokehold-death/>

¹¹ http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/ferguson_police_department_report.pdf

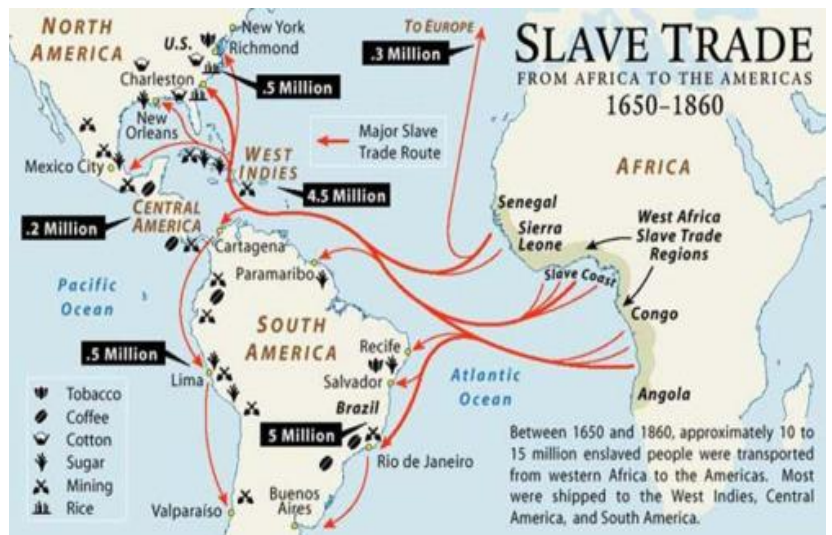
THE TEN PLAGUES OF RACIAL INJUSTICE

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 each plague to represent the catastrophic losses to our society wrought by the dehumanization and exploitation of Black people.

SLAVERY LAWFUL DISCRIMINATION LYNCHINGS AND HATE CRIMES REDLINING SEGREGATION: SEPARATE, NOT EQUAL DAILY INTERACTIONS WITH RACIAL BIAS DISPLACEMENT AND DESTRUCTION OF COMMUNITIES MASS INCARCERATION SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE SLAYING OF THE BLACK BORN

1. SLAVERY

Captive Africans were first sold into slavery in the colonies in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619.¹² Enslaved people produced much of the wealth of the early United States and the trans-Atlantic slave trade laid the foundations for the modern Euro-American economy. The 42 million African Americans today are descended from approximately 450,000 African people enslaved in what is now the U.S.¹³ The horrors and trauma of generational chattel slavery in the US cannot be condensed into a short explanation.



2. LAWFUL DISCRIMINATION

Our country's early laws codified preferential treatment of white people and criminalize and disenfranchise Black and indigenous people. Some of these laws remain on the books until the 1970s. These laws dehumanize people of color, normalize white racism, subdue resistance, and justify inhumane labor practices.

“In the early years of slavery, especially **before racism as a way of thinking was firmly ingrained**, while white indentured servants were often treated as badly as black slaves, there was a possibility of cooperation ... and so, measures were taken. About the same time that slave codes, involving discipline and punishment, were passed by the Virginia Assembly, (Virginia's ruling class) having proclaimed that all white men were superior to black, went on to offer their social (but white) inferiors a number of benefits previously denied them.”

—Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*

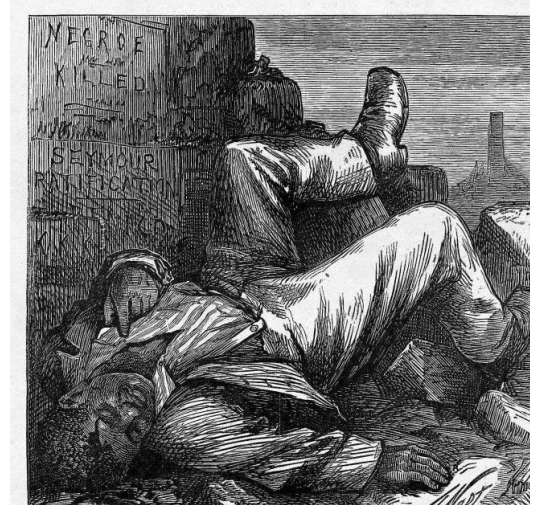
¹² <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/timeline/1619.html>

¹³ http://www.theroot.com/articles/history/2012/10/how_many_slaves_came_to_america_fact_vs_fiction.html

3. LYNCHINGS AND HATE CRIMES

After the Civil War and emancipation, some white people committed to preventing Black freedom and equality attempt to restore slavery in substance, if not in name. Terrorist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan form to murder Black people who attempt to vote or get educated, or for any perceived slight or provocation. The legacy of white supremacist violence continues today with killings of young Black people like Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis, murdered by white men who felt obscurely afraid and threatened by their very presence.

Thomas Nast, 1868



4. REDLINING

Banks and other lending institutions deny or charge more for mortgages and financial services loans to Black people. The term “redlining” was coined in the late 1960s when banks marked red lines on maps of Black neighborhoods to delineate where they would refuse to invest.

“The effect of racially uneven practices is devastating. Home ownership is the main vehicle by which American families accumulate wealth. The practices of the city’s major financial institutions result in a myriad of financial setbacks for blacks:

1. They must go to unregulated mortgage companies, which often charge higher interest rates.
2. They cannot easily get the money to improve their property, so some neighborhoods decline.
3. The tendency of white appraisers to undervalue property in black areas – whether of modest income or high -- means that those black homeowners cannot accumulate much equity.

That helps explain why the net worth of the typical American white family is 12 times greater than that of the average black family.”

—Bill Dedman, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* 1988

5. SEGREGATION: SEPARATE, NOT EQUAL

Social and educational segregation teach Black children and people to internalize the racist idea that they are inferior. Segregation in its many forms persists through and after the Civil Rights movement and throughout the United States.

Show me the doll that you like to play with ... the doll that’s a smart doll.
—Drs. Kenneth and Mamie (Phipps) Clark, *Doll Test Experiments*

Ebony Magazine, 1947



6. DAILY INTERACTIONS WITH RACIAL BIAS

White-dominated culture and white people send subtle and not-so-subtle messages to Black people daily, suggesting that they are marginal, exotic, unwanted, dangerous, flawed, criminal, worthless, a threat, a problem. These “microaggressions” reinforce the centrality of white people and culture, and dehumanize Black people, undermining their well-being and their real life prospects.

7. DISPLACEMENT AND DESTRUCTION OF COMMUNITIES

Housing policies fail to protect low-income, often Black and Latin@, communities from displacement by higher-paying residents. Disinvestment in poor and working-class neighborhoods opens the way for “renewal” projects that force longtime residents to leave, break up existing communities, and profit developers.



8. MASS INCARCERATION

Black communities are policed more frequently and more harshly than white communities. Black Americans are imprisoned at shockingly high rates, and given harsher sentences, disproportionate to their numbers in the general population and compared to the sentencing of whites. The state of Maryland, with a population of 6 million, incarcerates more people than Iraq, with a population of 32 million. Virginia’s prison population is equal to that of modern Egypt, with one-tenth its total population.¹⁴

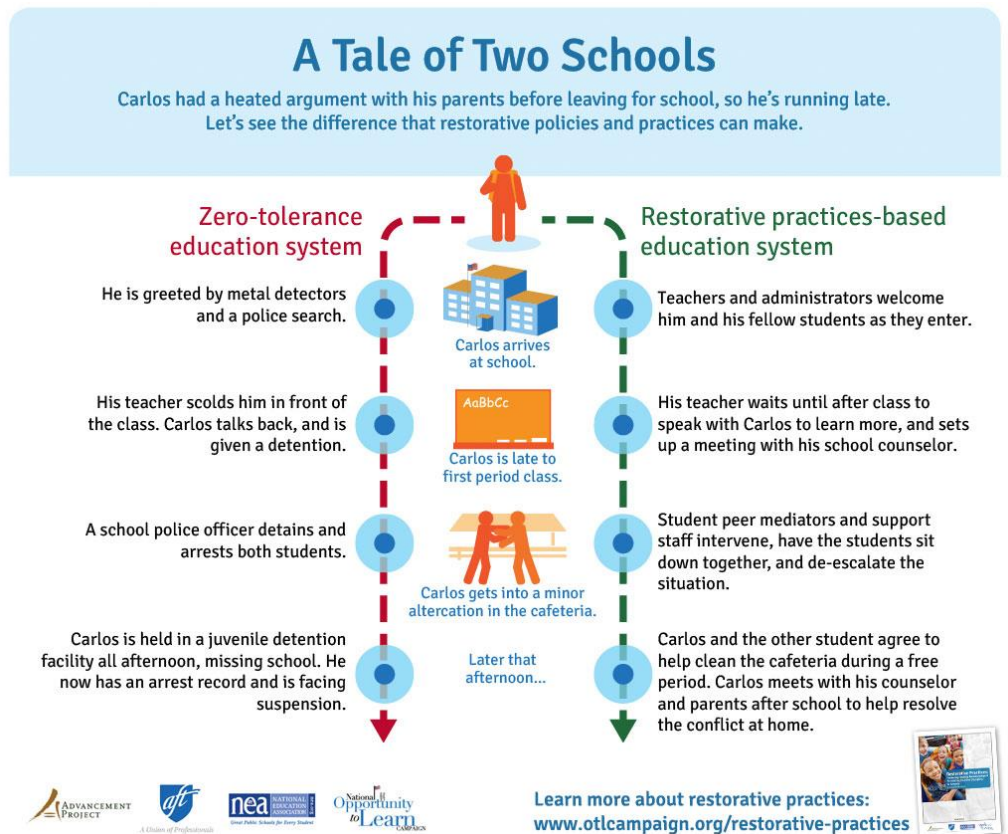
“African Americans are not significantly more likely to use or sell prohibited drugs than whites, but they are **made criminals at drastically higher rates for precisely the same conduct**. In fact, studies suggest that white professionals may be the most likely of any group to have engaged in illegal drug activity in their lifetime, yet they are the least likely to be made criminals ... Black people have been made criminals by the War on Drugs to a degree that dwarfs its effect on other racial and ethnic groups, especially whites. And the process of making them criminals has produced racial stigma.”

—Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 2010

¹⁴ <https://news.vice.com/article/the-mass-incarceration-problem-in-america>

9. SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

Through “zero-tolerance” policies and harsh disciplinary measures, schools treat Black and brown children like threats rather than vulnerable young people capable of learning and making restitution when they make mistakes. Research shows that people perceive Black children to be older than they actually are and less innocent than their white peers.¹⁵ Records of school discipline shunt Black children away from education and toward punitive systems, and curtail future job opportunities and academic achievement.



10. SLAYING OF THE BLACK BORN

Where we are: 300+ years of broken hearts.



MOURNER'S KADDISH

A complete list of people of color who were victims of police brutality is not available. The list is tragically long. Reading names, one after another, would take days and leave us numb. Tonight we will recite the Mourner's Kaddish, a prayer said to mourn those in our community we have lost.

Please rise if you are able.

*Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba
b'alma di-v'ra chirutei, v'yamlich
malchutei b'chayeichon uvyomeichon
uvchayei d'chol beit yisrael, ba'agala
uvizman kariv, v'im'ru: AMEN.*

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי
בְּרָא כְרֵעוּתָהּ וְנִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ.
בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעָגְלָא וּבְזִמָּן קָרִיב. וְאָמְרוּ
אָמֵן:

I pray that the power residing in God's Great Name be increased and made sacred, in this world which God created freely in order to preside in it. May this happen during your lifetime our lifetimes, and those of all the house of Israel. Make this happen soon, without delay. We express our agreement and hope by saying AMEN.

*Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam
ul'almei almaya.*

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וּלְעָלְמֵי
עָלְמֵיָא:

May that immense power residing in God's great name flow freely into our world and worlds beyond.

*Yitbarach v'yishtabach, v'yitpa'ar
v'yitromam v'yitnaseh, v'yithadar
v'yit'aleh, v'yit'halal, sh'mei d'kud'sha,
b'rich hu,*

יִתְבָּרַךְ, וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר, וְיִתְרֹמֵם,
וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא, וְיִתְהַדָּר, וְיִתְעַלֶּה, וְיִתְהַלָּל,
שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא.

May that Great Name, that sacred energy, be shaped and make effective and be acknowledged and be given the right honor and be seen as beautiful and elevating and bring jubilation.

*L'eila min-kol-birchata v'shirata,
tushb'chata v'nechemata da'amiran
b'alma, v'im'ru: AMEN.*

לְעֵלְא מִן כָּל בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא,
תִּשְׁבַּחְתָּא וְנִחְמָתָא, דְּאָמִירוּ בְּעֵלְמָא,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Way beyond our input of worshipful song and praise, which we express in this world. As we confirm our agreement and hope by saying AMEN.

*Y'hei shlama raba min-sh'maya
v'chayim tovim v'al-kol-yisrael, v'im'ru:
AMEN.*

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָה רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים
טוֹבִים וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

May that endless peace that heaven can release for us bring about the good life for us and for all Israel. As we express our agreement and hope by saying: AMEN.

*Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya'aseh
b'rachmav shalom aleinu v'al kol-
yisrael, v'al kol-yoshvei tevel, v'imru:
AMEN.*

עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרְמֹי הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה
בְּרַחֲמֵי שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

You, who harmonize it all on the highest planes – bring harmony and peace to us, to all Israel and all sentient beings. As we express our agreement and hope by saying: AMEN.¹⁶

3RD QUESTION: WHY IS RACISM AN ECONOMIC JUSTICE ISSUE?

From our country's very beginnings, legal and structural restrictions prevented Black people from making a decent living or accessing economic opportunity. Black people were denied or restricted access to the cornerstones of financial security and upward mobility, including education, jobs, and homeownership. Ta-Nehisi Coates' groundbreaking 2014 article "The Case for Reparations" exhaustively documented the history of economic plunder targeting Black people over the years, even and especially after slavery and segregation ended.¹⁷

Since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began recording unemployment statistics in 1972, Black unemployment has always been at least two-thirds higher than white unemployment. In 2014, the unemployment rate for blacks (11.4%) was more than twice that for whites (5.3 %).¹⁸ Between 2004 and 2013, the unemployment rate in DC for Black residents was more than three times the level for white residents, worse than any other state in the country.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said in Memphis, just days before he was assassinated, "Do you know that most of the poor people in our country are working every day? And they are making wages so low that they cannot begin to function in the mainstream of the economic life of our nation. These are facts which must be seen, and it is criminal to have people working on a full-time basis and a full-time job getting part-time income... Now our struggle is for genuine equality, which means economic equality. For we know that it isn't enough to integrate lunch counters. What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he doesn't earn enough money to buy a hamburger and a cup of coffee?"

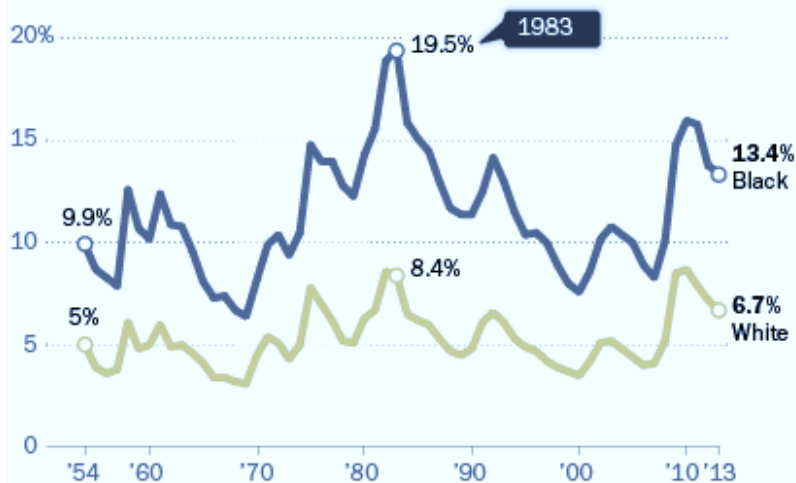
Economic justice battles are racial justice battles. That's why JUFJ, alongside our ally organizations who work directly with low-wage workers, fought to raise the minimum wage and guarantee paid sick days for all in DC. That's why we're fighting for paid sick leave rights today in Maryland, and for paid family leave for all workers in DC – no one should have to choose between their health, or their family, and the job they need. And we fight for affordable housing in DC, knowing that everyone should have a decent place to call home, regardless of how much money they have.

THIRD SPEAKER

Aaron Goggans

Unemployment rates by race

Seasonally adjusted



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Note: "Black and other," 1954-1971; "Black or African American" thereafter. 2013 average is January-July.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Many Jews today with economic power are only a generation or two removed from poverty. The impermanency of financial stability looms large in our collective history. Indeed, family and community memories of fleeing without our belongings, of having our resources seized, or of falling under a violent communist regime still figure in our experiences today. With this collective sense of economic and physical instability, we cling to our resources ever more tightly. Talk of a radical redistribution of economic power can feel like a threat to our sense of safety, and can make us suspicious of our neighbors. It is time that we leave this fear behind and replace it with a deep sense of interconnectedness and collective financial and physical safety.

—Marjorie Dove Kent, *Jews for Racial and Economic Justice*

¹⁷ <http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/05/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

¹⁸ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2014/09/06/black-unemployment-is-always-much-worse-than-white-unemployment-but-the-gap-depends-on-where-you-live/>

4TH QUESTION: I DON'T WANT TO ACCEPT THAT ANTI-BLACK RACISM WILL ALWAYS BE PRESENT IN OUR SOCIETY. HOW CAN WE FIGHT RACISM IN OUR OWN COMMUNITIES?

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 McCallister¹⁹ and Franchesca Ramsey²⁰:

- 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.



Faviana Rodriguez, Moms Rising 2014

¹⁹ Artist, educator, and leader of #BlackLivesMatterDMV

²⁰ Actress, comedian, vlogger, graphic designer, consultant, and natural hair geek: [youtube.com/watch?v=_dg86g-QIM0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dg86g-QIM0)

DAYEINU – IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH FOR US

Dayeinu is usually sung as a fun, upbeat song full of praise, gratefully exclaiming at each step of the Israelites' journey from degradation to freedom. The refrain echoes that each step "would have been enough for us."

Tonight we think of all of the racist laws, policies and attitudes that have changed for the better over time. And yet it feels beside the point to celebrate "progress" today when our brothers and sisters are still suffering and fighting for liberation. As Chris Rock said, "To say that black people have made progress would be to say they deserve what happened to them before." Any progress we've made as a society is white progress – white people being less racist.

We honor the people of every color who have fought and struggled for racial justice and Black liberation. There's so much to be grateful for, but we know **none of it is enough**. And if we think it is, if we're comfortable here, we're missing the picture. So tonight, *dayeinu* is not *dayeinu*. We are not celebrating freedom, we are calling for it.

BLESSING OVER THE FOURTH CUP OF WINE

Fill and raise the fourth cup of wine or juice.

We raise this fourth cup in **Solidarity**.



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Drink the fourth cup.

ELIJAH'S CUP



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, as our President has said. So let's stretch our own arms out toward justice. Let's bring Elijah by being God's hand in the world.



NEXT YEAR

It is written many times in our Torah, “You shall not oppress a stranger, since you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” It’s not enough to not oppress – silence and inaction are a vote for the status quo.

We end with a statement of hope: “*Lashanah haba’ah birushalayim ha’benuyah* / Next year in a redeemed Jerusalem!” This ancient phrase expresses our longing for redemption. *Kein yehi ratzon* – may it be so, speedily, and in our days.

SONG

This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine (3x)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

GLOSSARY

"In our world, divide and conquer must become define and empower." –Audre Lorde

With huge thanks to Omolara Williams McCallister and Mo Morgan, who wrote the starred definitions.

Color-blindness.* The belief in treating everyone “equally” by treating everyone the same; based in the presumption that differences are by definition bad or problematic, and therefore best ignored (i.e. “I don’t see race, gender, etc.”)

Discrimination.* Actions, based on conscious or unconscious prejudice, which favor one group over others in the provision of goods, services, or opportunities. Discrimination can be based on age, birth, race, color, ethnic origin, language, disability, familial status, marital status, political or other opinion, public assistance, creed, religion or belief, sex, gender, or sexual orientation.

Haggadah. Hebrew for “telling” or “narrative,” it is the name of the text that sets out the order of the Passover seder. Reading the Haggadah fulfills the commandment that we must tell our children about our liberation from slavery in Egypt as described in the Book of Exodus.

Intersectionality.* Coined by Dr. Kimberle Williams Crenshaw to describe the complex interaction of different types of privilege and oppression within each person. People can be privileged in some ways and definitely not privileged in others. There are many different types of privilege, not just skin-color privilege, that impact the way people can move through the world or are discriminated against.

Justice.* Fairness, equity, and morality in action or attitude in order to promote and protect human rights and responsibilities. In most societies, people work for justice by organizing through different categories of rights, such as civil, political, economic, social, and cultural.

Kiddush. Hebrew word whose root meaning is “to sanctify.” In a ritual context, *kiddush* is a blessing recited over a cup of wine or grape juice to sanctify a particular day. For example, *kiddush* is recited at the beginning of Shabbat (Sabbath) meals.

Microaggression.* Seemingly innocuous attitudes or slights by a person with privilege that indicate negativity, hostility, or alienation towards a person with an oppressed identity, and suggest that oppressed people are marginal, non-normal, less worthy. Even without conscious choice of the user, they have the same effect as conscious, intended discrimination.

Midrash Tanchuma. A medieval collection of rabbinic stories, legal discussions, and sermons, all connected with the five books of the Torah and named for Rabbi Tanchuma, the first character to appear in the collection. (*Adapted from Rabbi Jill Jacobs.*)

Oppression.* The systematic exploitation of one societal group by another for its own benefit. Involves institutional control, ideological domination, and the imposition of the dominant group's culture on the oppressed.

Passover. The name of this holiday comes from the Hebrew word, *pesach*, whose root meaning is to pass through, to pass over, to exempt, or to spare (referring to the story that the Angel of Death passed over the homes of the Israelites when slaying the first-born sons in Egypt, the 10th plague). *Pesach* is also the term for the sacrificial offering of a lamb that was made in the Temple on this holiday.

Prison Industrial Complex.* Term used to describe the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems. The Prison Industrial Complex maintains the authority of people who get their power through racial, economic and other privileges.

Privilege.* When one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they have done or failed to do. It is easy for people to be unaware of how privilege affects them. Denying that privilege exists is a serious barrier to change.

Racism.* Prejudice plus power. Racism involves discrimination based on the social construct of "race" along with the power to _____. It is for this reason that "reverse racism" does not exist, even if discrimination based on skin color can exist in a variety of ways.

Individual racism.* Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on difference in race/ethnicity. Individual racism is connected to/learned from broader socio-economic histories and processes and is supported and reinforced by systemic racism.

Internalized Racial Oppression.* Conscious and unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy in which whites are consistently ranked above People of Color. Internalized racial oppression in individuals presents barriers towards achievement of equality, as somebody may believe that they are inferior to people of other ethnic groups and that equality is therefore not a logical goal. A result can also be subscription to Respectability Politics, attempts by members of marginalized groups to police their own and show their values as being continuous and compatible with mainstream values rather than challenging the mainstream for its failure to accept difference.

Systemic Racism.* The policies and practices entrenched in established institutions, which result in the exclusion or promotion of designated groups. It differs from overt discrimination in that no individual intent is necessary. It manifests itself in two ways:

1. Institutional Racism: racial discrimination that derives from individuals carrying out the dictates of others who are prejudiced or of a prejudiced society
2. Structural Racism: inequalities rooted in the system-wide operation of a society that excludes substantial numbers of members of particular groups from significant participation in major social institutions.

Seder. A Hebrew word meaning "order," this is what we call the ritual festive meal celebrated the first one or two nights of Passover. The meal is called a seder because there is specific information and rituals that must be included, and tradition has come to specify a particular order for the rituals.

State Violence / Police Militarization.* The process whereby civilian police increasingly draw from, and pattern themselves around, the tenets and model of the military. The blurring of distinctions between the police and military institutions and between war and law enforcement. State violence generates a culture of civilian as enemy and loss of trust.

Talmud. Derived from the Hebrew word for study, the Talmud is a collection of texts that record oral law and commentary.

White Supremacy.* White supremacy is an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege.

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To learn more about Michael W. Twitty: afroculinaria.com

To learn more about Reverend Boyd: innerlightradio02.webs.com/rev-carolyn-l-boyd

To learn more about Aaron Goggans: wellexaminedlife.com

Search #FergusonSyllabus on Twitter: twitter.com/hashtag/fergusonsyllabus

To learn more about #BlackLivesMatter organizing in DC, check out:

Black Lives Matter DMV: fb.com/BLACKLIVESMATTERDMV and DC Ferguson: fb.com/dcfergusonmoves

Protocol and principles for White People Working to Support the Black Liberation Movement:

<https://baysolidarity.wordpress.com/2014/12/19/protocolandprinciples/>

Six Ways to Respond to Sexist Microaggressions in Everyday Conversations:

everydayfeminism.com/2015/01/responses-to-sexist-microaggressions/

Calling IN: A Less Disposable Way of Holding Each Other Accountable:

blackgirldangerous.org/2013/12/calling-less-disposable-way-holding-accountable/

White privilege: “America’s white fragility complex: Why white people get so defensive about their privilege,”

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