

WE ARE A MIXED MULTITUDE

Exodus 12:38

וְגַם־עָרַב רַב עִלָּה אֹתָם וְצֹאן וּבָקָר מִקְנֵה כְּבֹד מֵאֹד:

Moreover, a mixed multitude went up with [the Israelites], and very much livestock — both flocks and herds.

Rashi on Exodus 12:38

ערב רב — תערובת אמות של גרים:

MIXED MULTITUDE — A mingling of various nations who had become part of the Jewish People.

Leo Ferguson, “Mixed Multitudes: Nobody’s Free ‘til Everybody’s Free: A Racial Justice Haggadah for Pesach”

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.

Enzi Tanner, “[Believe us: Black Jews respond to the George Floyd protests](#)”

It’s also important that as the Jewish community reaches in and says how do we support their cause and how do we support the black community, it’s really important that people reach in to black Jews and other Jews of color and realize that we’re here. And we need our community.

And the other thing is: believe us. When George Floyd said I can’t breathe, he was not believed. When black women tell doctors and nurses during childbirth that they’re in pain, they’re not believed which is why they die at a higher rate. We don’t want to have to give a dissertation when we say we’re experiencing racism in our communities. We want to be believed. And in this moment now, it’s really important that, in those situations, that we’re able to be believed.

Questions

1. What does it mean for the Jewish People to be a mixed multitude?
2. How can we care for and support people of color within the Jewish Community?
3. What responsibility do we have to address racism inside and outside the Jewish Community?

OUR RESPONSIBILITY IN COMBATING RACISM

Talmud Bavli Gittin 61a

ת"ר מפרנסים עניי נכרים עם עניי ישראל ומבקרין חולי נכרים עם חולי ישראל וקוברין מתי נכרים עם מתי ישראל מפני דרכי שלום:

The rabbis taught: One sustains the poor of other people along with poor Jews, and one visits the sick of other people along with sick Jews, and one buries the dead of other people along with dead Jews. These are the ways of peace.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, "Religion and Race" (14 January 1963)

Few of us seem to realize how insidious, how radical, how universal an evil racism is. Few of us realize that racism is man's gravest threat to man, the maximum of hatred for a minimum of reason, the maximum of cruelty for a minimum of thinking... an honest estimation of the moral state of our society will disclose: *Some are guilty, but all are responsible.*

Carly Pildis, "What will YOU do to end systematic racism?"

I need you to fight it with me. It's not enough to quote Abraham Joshua Heschel marching with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the sixties. Heschel took *risks*. Raise your voice. Push back. Take risks to push everyone to be better.

Ginna Green, "Believe us: Black Jews respond to the George Floyd protests"

I want to see the Jewish community embrace radical possibility. A month ago, folks were pointing out the major change a pandemic had made possible. Radical shifts in work. Expectations. Air quality. But racism has been an American epidemic for 400 years, and it is against the backdrop of this transformational pandemic — and one that is taking black lives disproportionately — that we see the grief and rage and impact reach epic proportions. And there are solutions of varying radicalness that black folks have been proposing for years to right the systemic wrongs of a nation that black people built: reparations; universal basic income; mass decarceration; defunding police. Hammers and nails won't be enough to build what must come next for us all to thrive — we need bulldozers and forklifts. Embrace the radical possibility, and help make it true.

Questions

1. What responsibility does the Jewish Community have in addressing racism?
2. What role can we play as allies of other marginalized communities?
3. What kind of "radical possibilities" can we imagine - and what are steps (big or small) we can take to get there?