

# 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.