

Why A Racial Justice Seder?

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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.