

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.