

Why Black Lives Matter to a People for Whom G-d Promised a Holy Place

Contributed by [Jews for Racial and Economic Justice](#)

Source: Graie Barasch-Hagans, http://jfrej.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/JFREJ_BLM_Haggadah_Extended.pdf

As we open the door for the Prophet Elijah, Graie Barasch-Hagans asks us to love and support the stranger, the beggar and the familial in our struggle for collective liberation, and to recognize that these three peoples are often one and the same.

As Jews we come together in our most vulnerable moments. We come as community to support our mourners in our synagogues and in our homes. As Black folks we have come to the street, to the courthouse, to the town square to demand justice.

Our demands for justice are a communal act to love and support one another. A communal act to remember those who have been taken from us.

We have no kaddish, no framework of remembrance. We have hashtags, freedom songs, and protest chants.

When we say Black Lives Matter we are calling for the recognition of G-d in us all. We are calling for our skin to be recognized as the skin of family, our tears to be recognized as the tears of mothers, of fathers, of lovers, the tears of G-d.

We are a people who know that there is a better world and that it our responsibility, our duty to love and support one another. The stranger, the beggar, and the familial.

For those of us who live our lives through Blackness we cannot separate our duty as Jews from our fears of being strange in a land that though of our birth still does not recognize us fully as present. As Jews who cannot separate from our Blackness we inhabit spaces of silent loss. We struggle to rise as mourners in spaces that call for us to remember our time as slaves in Egypt. To remember that we are not safe as Jews. That are inhabited by the call "Never Again."

For we are the descendants of slaves with no great escape story. No great memorial to our suffering. No great G-d to intervene on our behalf, to choose us, to form us as a people. And yet for many of us who inhabit both Blackness and Jewishness we feel the deep divide, as the parting of the seas. For if our images of our great escape maintain the dichotomy of light versus dark would the sea fall in on us? Would we be cast aside, swept away in the great tide? Would we be held tight and carried with as much as care as the bread we did not have time to rise? As so many with faces with skin so similar to mine remain in bondage, in isolation, removed from a people still struggling will we return to the voice of "we" in our demand to Let my people go?

This piece has been edited for this edition. A fuller version can be found at blacklivesmatteronpassover.com