

Nine Days of Av for Racial Justice

Study & Action Guide, July 2020

Tisha b'Av is a Jewish holy day that falls on the 9th day of Av on the Jewish calendar.

On that day, we acknowledge and mourn those losses that make us who we are as a people and as individuals. Traditionally Tisha b'Av commemorates the destruction of the first and second temples in Jerusalem at the hands of imperial colonizers. The fall of the first Temple is attributed to the sin of idolatry and that of the second to *sinat hinam*—baseless hatred. These both lead back to the *egel*, the golden calf — the worship of gold and power and estrangement from holiness, from God and the image of God in other people. Over centuries, Tisha b'Av has been associated with other calamities that have impacted Jewish communities: the Crusades, expulsions from Spain, France and England, and the Shoah.

The 9 days of Av leading up to Tisha b'Av are times of reflection and introspection. It

is a time for all Jews to acknowledge our part in the calamities which occurred. This is not an exercise in victim-blaming. It is an opportunity to look at where we fall short in creating the social solidarity which we need to move from victimhood, or bystanderhood, to action. As Jews living in the US at this time, we extend our mourning and reflection to today's calamity — systemic racism. We turn our gaze to police violence against Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and to the Covid-19 pandemic, which is especially ruinous to indigenous folx, people of color, and people without money.

In particular, we ask how have those of us with white privilege stood idly by the blood of our neighbors, how have we let Jews of Color down, how have we colluded or ignored the idolatry of racism, that failure to see the holy image of God in each irreplaceable Black life?

For each of the 9 Days, this guide will offer:

- **Theme & Focus:** We name a harm whose impact we focus on and work to undo, and name it's impacts in Jewish histories and in contemporary struggles against white supremacist harm and violence.
- **Traditional Text:** We study texts our ancestors wrestled with in their mourning
- **Contemporary Text:** We study the wisdom of contemporary sages to unlearn racism and systemic oppression.
- **Actions to make *teshuva*(repair):** Actions will include reaching out to elected representatives, public demonstrations for those able to be outside at this time, and suggestions for continued study and inner work on internalized racism and anti-Semitism.

We are delving into histories of harm and violence, enslavement and attempted genocide. Some of the texts will explore violence in the past and present, and we invite readers to go as slowly as needed, notice embodied and emotional reactions, and offer support and nourishment to yourself and others when engaging with this material.

How do we connect with Tisha b'Av in our time? How do we connect to the destruction of the Temple centuries ago?

To participate in Tisha b'Av, one does not have to take our stories literally or even to actually want a sacrificial temple back.

We learn in Talmud Bavli Makkot 24b:

The sages were ascending to Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple. When they arrived at Mount Scopus and saw the site of the Temple, they tore their garments. When they arrived at the Temple Mount, they saw a fox that emerged from the site of the Holy of Holies. They began weeping, and Rabbi Akiva was laughing. They said to him: For what reason are you laughing? Rabbi Akiva said to them: For what reason are you weeping? They said to him: This is the place concerning which it is written: "And the non-priest who approaches shall die" (Numbers 1:51), and now foxes walk in it; and shall we not weep?

Rabbi Akiva said to them: That is why I am laughing, as it is written, when God revealed the future to the prophet Isaiah: "And I will take to Me faithful witnesses to attest: Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah" (Isaiah 8:2). Now what is the connection between Uriah and Zechariah? Uriah prophesied during the First Temple period, and Zechariah prophesied during the Second Temple period. Rather, the verse established that fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah is dependent on fulfillment of the prophecy of Uriah.

In the prophecy of Uriah it is written: "Therefore, for your sake Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become rubble, and the Temple Mount as the high places of a forest" (Micah 3:12), where foxes are found. There is a rabbinic tradition that this was prophesied by Uriah. In the prophecy of Zechariah it is written: "There shall yet be elderly men and elderly women sitting in the streets of Jerusalem" (Zechariah 8:4). Until the prophecy of Uriah with regard to the destruction of the city was fulfilled I was afraid that the prophecy of Zechariah would not be fulfilled, as the two prophecies are linked. Now that the prophecy of Uriah was fulfilled, it is evident that the prophecy of Zechariah remains valid. The Gemara adds: The Sages said to him: Akiva, you have comforted us; Akiva, you have comforted us."

Out of great upheaval can come change. Out of the Temple's destruction came Rabbinic Judaism, the tradition of study, prayer and action that sustains us now as we fight for justice.

Text and actions for each day:

[1st of Av ~ 22nd of July](#)

[2nd of Av ~ 23rd of July](#)

[3rd of Av ~ 24th of July](#)

[4th of Av ~ 25th of July: Shabbat Hazon \(vision\)](#)

[5th of Av ~ 26th of July](#)

[6th of Av ~ 27th of July](#)

[7th of Av ~ 28th of July](#)

[8th of Av ~ 29th of July](#)

[9th of Av ~ 30th of July](#)

1st of Av ~ 22nd of July

Theme & Focus: Setting our intention to Rise As One against systemic racism.

We know that racism, white supremacy, and antisemitism have impacted and harmed our ancestors across centuries and continents. We reflect on our position as both impacted by and perpetrators of systemic harm, and wrestle with our inheritances of both struggle and surviving.

Traditional Text:

Rambam Hilchot Taanyiot states: There are days that all the people of Israel observe as fasts on account of the tragic events which occurred on them, the purpose being to appeal to the hearts and to lay open the paths of repentance. This serves as a reminder of our evil doings, and the deeds of our ancestors which were like ours now, resulting in the afflictions endured by them and by us. By remembering these things we are likely to repent and do right, as it is written: "They shall confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors..." (Leviticus 26:40).

Contemporary Text:

"This is love work. Love is one of those words that is hard to define. But in the context of this work, here is what it means to me: It means that you do this work because you believe in something greater than your own self-gain. It means you do this work because you believe that every human being deserves dignity, freedom, and equality. It means you do this work because you desire wholeness for yourself and the world. It means you do this work because you desire wholeness for yourself and the world. It means you do this work because you want to be a good **ancestor**. It means you do this work because love is not a verb to you but an action."

- Layla Saad, *Me and White Supremacy*

Action: Commit to Self-Education

Here are some suggestions for books/articles to read, to begin your self-education:

- [Jews of Color and the Policing of White Space](#), *Jewish Currents*, by Rebecca Pierce
- *Prison by Any Other Name* by Maya Schenwar and Victoria Law
- *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements* by Charlene Carruthers
- *Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color* by Andrea Ritchie
- *Are Prisons Obsolete?* by Angela Davis
- *Medicine Stories: Essays for Radicals* by Aurora Levins Morales
- *When They Call You a Terrorist: a Black Lives Matter Memoir* by Patrisse Cullors, ashe bandele
- *The Color of Jews: Racial Politics and Radical Diasporism* by Melanie Kay/Kantrowitz
- [I Helped Coin the Term 'Jews of Color.' It's Time For a History Lesson](#), Hey Alma - Shahanna McKinney-Baldon
- *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* - Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz
- *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X Kendi
- *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex* by Eric A. Stanley
- *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad

When ordering Books, buy from Black Owned Bookstores!

- [Eso Won Books](#)
- [Ashay By The Bay](#)
- [Mahogany Books](#)
- [Loyalty Bookstore](#)
- [Pyramid Books](#)
- [Black Dot Cultural Center & Bookstore](#)
- [Semicolon Bookstore & Gallery](#)

- The Lit Bar
- Sisters Uptown Bookstore
- Uncle Bobbie's

2nd of Av ~ 23rd of July

Theme & Focus: Opposing Idolatry in all of its forms.

Many of our ancestors believed that the sin of worshiping the golden calf was one of mistakes that led to the destruction of the First Temple. In our time, predatory capitalism and an economic system that extracts and destroys rather than gives life is leading to the destruction of all life on the planet, and impacting Indigenous people, Black people, People of Color, and poor and working class communities first and foremost. How do we shift from worshiping objects to respecting and honoring life?

Historical Text:

Isaiah Chapter 58 3-7:

“Why, when we fasted, did You not see?
 When we starved our bodies, did You pay no heed?”
 Because on your fast day
 You see to your business
 And oppress all your laborers!
 Because you fast in strife and contention,
 And you strike with a wicked fist!
 Your fasting today is not such
 As to make your voice heard on high.
 Is such the fast I desire,
 A day for people to starve their bodies?
 Is it bowing the head like a bulrush
 And lying in sackcloth and ashes?
 Do you call that a fast,
 A day that God wants?
 No, this is the fast I desire:
 To unlock the fetters of wickedness,
 And untie the cords that bind
 To let the oppressed go free;
 To break every yoke.
 It is to share bread with the hungry
 To bring the abjected people home
 And when you see someone naked, clothe them
 And from your siblings, do not turn away.”

Contemporary Text:

As Jews, if we are to take seriously our Torah, our covenant, our faith, our bris ceremonies and Passover seders, our Kiddush blessings and every time we invoke the “memory of the exodus from Egypt” — זכר ליציאת מצרים — then we cannot participate in that fear or engage in that laughter. Without the justice of reparations, we have no liberation story. It should be a core issue of Jewish American politics to demand that H.R. 40 be brought to the House floor and passed, that reparations be studied by a Congressional Commission. We know that liberation from slavery without reparations is a woefully incomplete liberation. Whenever as Jews we recall the liberation, whenever we read about the Mishkan, and whenever we reflect back on the United States, we must echo Coates’s poignant words: “The wealth gap merely puts a number on something we feel but cannot say — that American prosperity was ill-gotten and selective in its distribution. What is needed is an airing of family secrets, a settling with old ghosts. What is needed is a healing of the American psyche and the banishment of white guilt... a national reckoning that would lead to spiritual renewal.”

[The Torah Case for Reparations - R'Aryeh Bernstein](#)

Action: Support the transformation of our economy and governance

- In Atlanta, GA: July 23rd, 7pm EST [ATL Jews Building a Multi-Racial Democracy: A Community Conversation](#): At this (virtual!) event we will discuss the history of racism and police brutality, our own racial identities as Jewish Atlantans, and our role in the fight for racial justice in our city. We’ve seen up close in the last month the power of protest and that our city and nation have a long way to go. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to learn about Bend the Arc: Jewish Action in Atlanta, hear about ways to get involved in the organizing, and build community with other progressive Jews. We’ll finish the evening with a collective action to stand up for Black lives. As Bend the Arc: Jewish Action Atlanta, **we know Black Lives Matter is a Jewish value**. Our work is just beginning. We look forward to connecting with you in the coming weeks and months to defend Black lives and to create a multi-racial democracy where we are all free and safe.
- Thursday, July 23rd, 7pm: [Standing in Solidarity](#): A Conversation with Zach Banner and Black and Jewish Pittsburgh Activists
- In Los Angeles: [Sign](#) the People’s Budget LA petition to support funding for #carenotcops
- Support [Reparations Summer](#)
- Support [For the Gwols](#)
- Support [Gender Justice LA](#)

3rd of Av ~ 24th of July

Theme & Focus: Unlearn systemic racism in our own lives

We are taught that the Temples were destroyed not because of an outside enemy, but due to *sinat hinam*, baseless hatred. As we mourn the destruction of the Second Temple, we work to unlearn systemic racism as it plays out interpersonally, in our interactions, actions and inactions.

Historical Text:

Yoma 9b (translation from Sefaria)

אבל מקדש שני שהיו עוסקין בתורה ובמצות וגמילות חסדים מפני מה חרב מפני
שהיתה בו שנאת חנם ללמדך ששקולה שנאת חנם כנגד שלש עבירות ע"ז גלוי
עריות ושפיכות דמים

However, considering that the people during **the Second Temple** period **were engaged in Torah** study, observance of **mitzvot**, and **acts of kindness**, and that they did not perform the sinful acts that were performed in the First Temple, **why was** the Second Temple **destroyed**? It was destroyed **due to** the fact **that there was wanton hatred** during that period. This comes **to teach you that** the sin of **wanton hatred is equivalent to the three** severe **transgressions: Idol worship, forbidden sexual relations and bloodshed.**

Contemporary Texts:

But perhaps we should reevaluate what "sinat chinam" actually is. Perhaps it is that sinas chinam is not limited to active hatred, but can also include apathy.

Whose side do we regularly choose, the powerful or the powerless? The victim or the perpetrator? Are we silent in the face of bullies? Do we stay on the fence, hiding behind the excuse of "It's complicated" or "I'm not qualified"?"

MaNishtana, "[Baseless Humility: The Three Weeks and Race](#):"

But the pervasive belief is that Jews are white, and black people are Christian and Muslim, and I fall in between and nobody knows what to do with themselves. The palpable push always just feels like they think I'm a threat and that's what's so hard to swallow...It's a 50-50 shot any time I step into a Jewish space that I will have a good or a not so good experience. It all depends on who is on the door. It all depends on who I end up sitting next to. And so, I do not belong to a synagogue because 90% of the time it's not a good

experience for me unless I'm going where people already know me, and I don't have anybody in LA. My family is in Chicago. But after the Pittsburgh massacre, I decided that I wanted to be bigger than my discomfort and to show up for Shabbat as we were asked to do. And I went to a synagogue and it was one that everyone I knew, Rabbis, everybody was telling me, "Go to this place. They will be so warm and welcoming, they'll overwhelm you with love." From the moment I arrived, it was the opposite. Their security people practically strip-searched me. And when I said, what? They said, "You have to understand. We don't know you, and there's a lot of anxiety because of the Pittsburgh massacre."...And I said, "With all due respect, the Pittsburg shooter was a white man. And on my worst day, I don't resemble a white man. So tell me, what is it about me that is so threatening to you?" And that's the question nobody wants to answer.

Marra Gad, author of The Color of Love, in "[Racism in Progressive Communities](#)"

Action:

- [Join Justice LA](#)'s rapid response text bank at 10:30am to decarcerate LA and work towards abolition of carceral systems.
- [Sign](#) the Not Free to Desist open letter and adapt it for your Jewish communities and institutions. Initiate conversations in your Jewish communities with this open letter as a guide. If you're in Seattle, WA, support the [Racial Justice Demands for Seattle Jewish Organizations](#)

4th of Av ~ 25th of July:

Theme & Focus: Looking to the future

We enter into Shabbat Hazon, the Shabbat of Vision before Tisha B'Av. We immerse in the Haftarah of Isaiah, full of overwhelming and terrifying prophecy. Our tradition compels us to look to the future, and we ask, what is the future we are offering the next generations? How can we support young people, choose justice over scarcity and fear, and work for justice for future generations to come?

Historical Text:

Isaiah 1:16-21 (Haftarah Shabbat Hazon)

Clean and strengthen yourselves; Put your evil deeds out of My sight. Stop doing evil. Learn to do good, seek out justice for the oppressed; Uphold the rights of the orphan, defend the widow. "Come now and reason," says HaShem, "If your misdeeds are bloodred, they can become like fresh snow, if they are like dyed wool, they can be like fresh fleece. If you agree and listen, you will be nourished by the earth. But if you refuse and are haughty, the sword will devour you."

Contemporary Text:

From: [Students Deserve](#) in Los Angeles, CA:

#StudentsDeserve Support from LAUSD During a Global Pandemic!

#StudentsDeserve universal passage of all classes and graduation for seniors, not stressful work and deadlines.

#StudentsDeserve graduation ceremonies (when it's safe to have them) to celebrate our achievements.

#StudentsDeserve food distribution centers that are ICE-free and police-free zones.

#StudentsDeserve the cancellation of all rent and evictions, not just a delay on when rent is due.

#StudentsDeserve immediate housing, healthcare, and sanitary resources for all who need them.

#StudentsDeserve to have loved ones freed from all prison/detention facilities to stop the spread of COVID-19.

#StudentsDeserve mental health support for trauma and setbacks from this period. We demand a permanent college counselor, PSW (psychiatric social worker), AND grief counselor at every school when schools reopen.

#StudentsDeserve to not be pepper sprayed by school police when we go back to school.

#StudentsDeserve everything that the Black Lives Matter Global Network is demanding in terms of permanent structural supports for communities, that United Teachers Los Angeles is demanding of local and state leaders, that Healthy LA Coalition & LA Tenants Union are demanding regarding housing and eviction moratoriums, and that the Justice LA Coalition and others are demanding regarding "criminal" and prisoner justice during COVID-19.

We want schools to divest from criminalization and policing. We want schools to invest in us as Black, Muslim, undocumented, indigenous, and queer youth in poor and working class communities of color.

Action:

- BLM-LA & **Students Deserve** led the push to DEFUND THE L.A. School police department by \$25 million. [Support](#) Students Deserve in their youth-led work to combat systemic racism, invest in Black students, and defund the LAPD in LAUSD.
- Mark shabbat using [BLM Shabbat: Moments of Radical Rest](#) from Jews for Racial and Economic Justice
- Sunday, July 25th, 5pm EST: [What We've Lost: A Communal Conversation about Exile and Song during a Global Pandemic](#) by Let My People Sing

5th of Av ~ 26th of July

Theme & Focus: None of us are safe until all of us are safe

We wrestle with complacency, mourn how our ancestors lives were lost when their neighbors did not intervene. We ask that our mourning jolt us out of our own complacency. We remember the violence of the Crusades, when Christian armies destroyed Jewish lives on their way to commit violent atrocities against Muslims in Jerusalem. We know that today, as well as then, none of us are safe until all of us are safe, and we must overturn the complacency that separates us from each other.

Historical Text:

Mishnah Bava Batra 2:1, 9: One should not dig a pit near the pit of his neighbor, nor a ditch, nor a cave, nor an irrigation pool, nor a laundry-pool, unless one distances it from one's neighbor's wall by at least three handbreadths, as well as plastering it. One should distance olive pulp, manure, salt, plaster, and rocks from one's neighbor's wall by at least three handbreadths, as well as plastering it. One should distance one's seeds, plow, and urine from one's neighbor's wall by three handbreadths... They must distance animal carcasses, graves and tanneries from a town by fifty cubits. And they may not make a tannery except to the east of a city. Rabbi Akiva says: One may set it up on any side except the west [from where the wind blows most often], and one must distance it fifty cubits [from the town].

Contemporary Text:

From [Red Sea](#) by Aurora Levins Morales:

This time we're tied at the ankles.
We cannot cross until we carry each other,
all of us refugees, all of us prophets.
No more taking turns on history's wheel,
trying to collect old debts no-one can pay.
The sea will not open that way.

This time that country
is what we promise each other,
our rage pressed cheek to cheek
until tears flood the space between,
until there are no enemies left,
because this time no one will be left to drown
and all of us must be chosen.
This time it's all of us or none.

Action:

- In California: Urge your CA State Senator to vote #YesonAB345, an environmental justice bill that would create protective zones around oil and gas sites. Oil and gas extraction disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and people of color across California. Follow the Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment's [instructions](#) and read the [toolkit](#) to take action. Find your CA state representatives [here](#).

6th of Av ~ 27th of July

Theme and Focus: Everyone deserves to be safe

We mourn the loss of home, community, places that keep us safe, nurture and nourish us. As we remember times throughout history that Jews were pushed out of their homes, we recognize the collusion of policing and unjust, racist housing policies that displace and kill people today. We mourn the loss of Breonna Taylor, whose completely unnecessary death was the result of police as a force used to target specific neighborhoods, with racist and deadly ends.

Historical Text:

Sha'ali Serufa: A Medieval Lamentation over Burned Volumes of Talmud in Medieval France by Rav Meir of Rotenberg, translation by Gershon Scholem

"I will pour tears that should be like a brook and gush over the graves of your noble princes Moses and Aaron on Mount Hor, and I will ask: is there a new Torah, is that why your scrolls were burnt? Sivan and Tamuz have joined together to spoil your grace and the whole crown of your beauty; the tablets are shattered, and since it repeated its "knavishness", its law was burnt in the fire. Is this the doubled recompense? My soul is appalled and how can my palette take pleasure in food, after I saw that your goods were gathered to market like a castaway."

Contemporary Text:

An Eco-Lament for Tisha b'Av, by Richard Kaplan:

Jeremiah wept...oh,
Hearing her song,
Lamenting her Temple, so wounded.

Alas, my forests are dying,
I hear my waters crying,
Have all the lessons, the lessons been lost?
Oh, oh that I, oh that they, were pure again.

My precious threads of life, that are no more,
In silence, live the children of the poor,
Alas, why will they not feel their disgrace?
Oh, oh that I, oh that they, were pure again.

In the night, she weeps and weeps,
Longing for her lovers,
Who so seldom come, to comfort her.

Bring us back to You, oh Soul of Souls,
Spark us to turn, that we may be seen,
Mending this Temple, our Eden.

From [Movement Generation's Just Transition Zine](#):

"A Just Transition requires us to build a visionary economy for life in a way that is very different than the economy we are in now. Constructing this visionary economy calls for strategies that democratize, decentralize and diversify economic activity while we dampen down consumption, and (re)distribute resources and power. This zine is our offering towards that end – it is a humble point of departure for folks interested in building collective vision and action towards Ecological Justice that does not separate humans from nature, or social equity from ecological integrity."

Action:

- Housing--protection from eviction--[Sign](#) the Healthy LA petition
- Follow @StreetWatchLA and call/tweet an end to LAPD "Special Enforcement Zones" surrounding shelters. We support #HomesNotZones #ServicesNotSweeps
- [As Louisville Jews, we rise with Black Lives Matter Louisville](#) Justice for Breonna Taylor

7th of Av ~ 28th of July

Theme and Focus: Addressing our roles in settler colonial violence

We turn now to complicity, and confront the complicated history of white Jews' role in the colonization of this land. In 1492, as Jews were expelled from Spain, Columbus began his voyage of conquest and genocide of Indigenous people. Today, as we see the COVID-19 pandemic decimating Indigenous communities, white Jews must ask, what are our roles in challenging settler colonialist violence, within and outside of the Jewish community?

Traditional Text:

From the the [Alhambra Decree, Edict of the Expulsion of the Jews](#), 1492:

“Notwithstanding that we were informed of the great part of this before now and we knew that the true remedy for all these injuries and inconveniences was to prohibit all interaction between the said Jews and Christians and banish them from all our kingdoms, we desired to content ourselves by commanding them to leave all cities, towns, and villages of Andalusia where it appears that they have done the greatest injury, believing that that would be sufficient so that those of other cities, towns, and villages of our kingdoms and lordships would cease to do and commit the aforesaid acts. And since we are informed that neither that step nor the passing of sentence [of condemnation] against the said Jews who have been most guilty of the said crimes and delicts against our holy Catholic faith have been sufficient as a complete remedy to obviate and correct so great an opprobrium and offense to the faith and the Christian religion, because every day it is found and appears that the said Jews increase in continuing their evil and wicked purpose wherever they live and congregate, and so that there will not be any place where they further offend our holy faith, and corrupt those whom God has until now most desired to preserve, as well as those who had fallen but amended and returned to Holy Mother Church, the which according to the weakness of our humanity and by diabolical astuteness and suggestion that continually wages war against us may easily occur unless the principal cause of it be removed, which is to banish the said Jews from our kingdoms. Because whenever any grave and detestable crime is committed by members of any organization or corporation, it is reasonable that such an organization or corporation should be dissolved and annihilated and that the lesser members as well as the greater and everyone for the others be punished, and that those who perturb the good and honest life of cities and towns and by contagion can injure others should be expelled from those places and even if for lighter causes, that may be injurious to the Republic, how much more for those greater and most dangerous and most contagious crimes such as this.

From [Unlearning the Doctrine of Discovery](#) BY Daniel José Camacho:

“Spanish friar Bartolomé de las Casas recounts the final words of Hatuey, an indigenous leader on the island of Hispaniola who resisted the conquest:

When tied to the stake, the cacique (chief) Hatuey was told by a Franciscan friar who was present . . . something about the God of the Christians and of the articles of Faith. And he was told what he could do in the brief time that remained to him, in order to be saved and go to heaven. The cacique, who had never heard any of this before and was told he would go to Inferno where, if he did not adopt the Christian faith, he would suffer eternal torment, asked the Franciscan friar if Christians all went to heaven. When told that they did he said he would prefer to go to hell.”

Contemporary Texts:

[Virus divides 'haves' from 'have-nots'](#), Navajo Times, May 12 2020

“By the end of March, just 15 days from when the first couple of cases were reported on Navajo, there were 116 cases per 100,000 people, taking the third spot among the hardest-hit states at that time. Just 12 days later, on April 11, 2020, the Navajo Nation had 465 cases per 100,000, still only trailing New York state (920) and New Jersey (655). By the end of April, cases per capita had risen on the Navajo Nation to 1,427, second only to the state of New York, while deaths per capita rank fifth in the United States relative to the states. (<https://tinyurl.com/y93jhcqa>). It was not hard to predict that COVID-19 would have success among a people with limited running water, limited electricity, limited telecommunications, housing insecurity, and frank poverty.”

From *The Settler Colonialism Primer* by Laura Hurwitz and Shawn Bourque:

“Anyone not Indigenous, living in a settler colonial situation is a settler. Therefore all non- Indigenous people living in what is today called the “U.S.” are settlers living on stolen land. Settlers do not all benefit equally from settler colonialism. Many people were brought to settler states as slaves, indentured servants, refugees, etc. Race and class largely prefigure which settlers benefit the most from usurped Indigenous homelands. But as the Unsettling Minnesota Source Book proclaims, “it is all of our responsibilities as settlers, especially those of us who descended from European colonizers, to challenge the systems of domination from which we benefit.”

From [America's Jewish Colonizers](#), interview in Jewish Currents with David S. Koffman, author of *The Jews' Indian: Colonialism, Pluralism, and Belonging in America*

“Jews settled, they made homes that were semi-permanent, and then permanent, as other whites did. They were part of a violent process of dispossession, and sometimes very proud of that process. We can see this in lectures that “old-timer” Jews of the West gave at pioneer society meetings, in the letters and diaries they kept, and in the obituaries and local histories left by Jews living in the West. It’s not uncommon to find triumphant declarations by Jews about advancing “civilization in the wilderness.” They not only did their part in the military as individuals, but sometimes committed acts of vigilante violence in order to hasten the colonial settlement process. So in all those most important ways, they’re not different.”

Further reading:

- [Junípero Serra's brutal story in spotlight as pope prepares for canonisation](#)
- [When the Spanish Inquisition expanded to the “New World”](#)

Action: Support Indigenous calls to action

- [Donate](#) to or access resources from your local Indigenous Mutual Aid Network - in Los Angeles, donate to [Frontline Medics](#), Paypal wocfrontlinemedics@gmail.com
- [Donate](#) to the NDN Collective
- Practice and encourage your community Indigenous Land acknowledgement: [Land Acknowledgements Through a Jewish Lens](#) by Mitsui Collective
- Download [Native Land app](#)
- Pay Real Rent to [Duwamish](#) and [Shuumi](#) Land Tax

8th of Av ~ 29th of July

Theme & Focus: Mourning loss in the Holocaust

We turn to mourning and reckoning with the Nazi's "Final Solution," attempted genocide of Jewish people, alongside Nazism's deadly violence against queer and trans people, people with disabilities, communists, socialist, anarchists and political dissidents, and more. We sit in the terrifying realities of white nationalism's contemporary manifestations.

Traditional Text:

Rabbi Kalonymous Kalman Shapira, the Warsaw Ghetto Rebbe, known also as the Piaseczna Rebbe:

"Our Teacher Moshe, the faithful shepherd, juxtaposed the death of Sarah to the *Akeida* in order to side with us, and to show what happened from too much suffering, God forbid – that her soul departed. And if that is what happened to Sarah, who was such a righteous woman... and she was nevertheless unable to bear great suffering, how much more so is that true of us.

One can also say that even our Matriarch Sarah herself, who took the *Akeida* so to heart that her soul departed, did it for the benefit of Israel, to show God how it is impossible for the Jews to tolerate too much suffering, and even someone who by God's mercy remains alive even after his sufferings, in any case part of his strength and his intelligence and his spirit have been broken and lost – what difference does it make to me if you kill all of me or only part?"

Contemporary Text:

[Skin in the Game](#) by Eric Ward:

"I've been terrorized by structural racism and White nationalist activism all my life. Contrary to a popular image of White nationalists living exclusively off the grid, far

from people of color—who are imagined to live exclusively on it—White nationalists are our neighbors. As a kid in Southern California and as a young adult in Oregon, deep in a West Coast punk scene that in some ways looked a lot like the U.S. in 2017, they were literally mine. Because I grew up Black in a city and a scene where people of color were under attack by White nationalists, the immediacy of the movement's threat and its hatred of dark-skinned people like my family and friends is something I have always known. I thought I understood what motivated them, and I thought their motivation always looked like me. What I learned when I got to Oregon, as I began to log untold hours trying to understand White nationalists and their ideas, was that antisemitism was the lynchpin of the White nationalist belief system. That within this ideological matrix, Jews—despite and indeed because of the fact that they often read as White—are a different, unassimilable, enemy race that must be exposed, defeated, and ultimately eliminated. Antisemitism, I discovered, is a particular and potent form of racism so central to White supremacy that Black people would not win our freedom without tearing it down.”

Action: Take action against white supremacist terror

- Support [Stop LA Spying Coalition](#), which rejects police oppression, racial profiling, and predictive policing that is inherently xenophobic.
- [Learn who's fueling antisemitism](#) from Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
- As the sun sets, we read from the book of Lamentations and those who are fasting on Tisha b'Av begin their fast

9th of Av ~ 30th of July

Theme & Focus: On Tisha b'Av, we have nothing left but to sit and weep.

Traditional Text:

El Malei Rachamim, Divine Source of Compassion, traditional elegy for the dead:

Compassionate source of all that is,
who is present in the heavens,
take our loved one [name] under your holy,
pure and glorious wings
that shine like the sky,
as we provide charity
in the name of the soul of our loved one.

אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמַיִם,
הַמְצִיא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה עַל כַּנְפֵי הַשְּׂכִינָה,
בְּמַעְלוֹת קְדוּשִׁים וְטְהוּרִים
כְּזוֹהַר הַרְקִיעַ מְזַהְרִים,
בוֹרֵךְ טוֹב בֶּן בְּלִימַע וְשִׁלְמָה אֶת נַשְׂמַת
שְׁהַלֵּךְ לְעוֹלָמוֹ, בְּגֵן עֵדֶן תְּהֵא מְנוּחָתוֹ.

[Please] Compassionate one,

provide rest for the soul of our loved one in
Ga'an Eden
and never withdraw your protective wings
and take [bundle] this soul into the bond of
life. Hashem is this soul's
everlasting inheritance and peaceful
resting place,
and let us say: Amen.

[אָנאַ], בַּעַל הַרְחָמִים יִסְתַּיְרֵהוּ
בְּסִתְר [כְּנָפַיִךְ] כְּנָפְיוֹ לְעוֹלָמִים,
וְיִצְרָר [וְיִצְרָר] בְּצִרוֹר הַחַיִּים
אֶת נַשְׁמָתוֹ, ִּי הוּא נִחְלָתוֹ,
וְיִנוּחַ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכְּבוֹ, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן:

Contemporary Text:

Kaddish for Black Lives by the [Jewish Multi-Racial Network](#):

Creator of life, source of compassion. Your breath remains the source of our spirit, even as too many of us cry out that we cannot breathe. Lovingly created in your image, the color of our bodies has imperiled our lives.

Black lives are commodified yet devalued, imitated but feared, exhibited but not seen.

Black lives have been pursued by hatred, abandoned by indifference and betrayed by complacency.

Black lives have been lost to the violence of the vigilante, the cruelty of the marketplace and the silence of the comfortable.

We understand that Black lives are sacred, inherently valuable, and irreplaceable.

We know that to oppress the body of the human is to break the heart of the divine.

We yearn for the day when the bent will stand straight.

We pray that the hearts of our country will soften to the pain endured for centuries.

We will do the work to bind up the wounds, to heal the shattered hearts, to break the yoke of oppression.

As the beauty of the heavens is revealed to us each day, may each day reveal to us the beauty of our common humanity. Amen.

Action:

- Wednesday, July 29, 2020 7:30 PM - Thursday, July 30, 2020 8:30 PM EST: [Tisha b'Av of Teshuvah \(Return\): Mourning the Destruction of Black...](#) with Jews for Racial and Economic Justice
- Thursday July 30th, 4pm: Jews Say #CloseTheCamps on Tisha b'Av with Tru'ah
- Thursday, July 30th, 8pm: Tisha b'Av: Mourning and Reimagining Safety with Bend the Arc: Jewish Action

Donate & Support

- Mutual Aid LA - <https://www.mutualaidla.org>

- Jewish Multiracial Network - <https://www.jewishmultiracialnetwork.org>
- Be'Chol Lashon - <https://globaljews.org>
- Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective - <https://www.beam.community/donation>
- Black Women for Wellness - <https://www.bwwla.org>