RACIAL JUSTICE AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Monday, October 26 | 7:30 PM | Temple Beth-El
What does spirituality have to do with racial justice? This workshop will invite you to consider racism from a spiritual lens. You will come away with:

1. a deeper understanding of spirituality, including the ways in which it overlaps with and diverges from religion;

2. a deeper understanding of racism, including its spiritual roots;

3. clarity about how your personal values intersect with the antiracist movement; and

4. suggestions for spiritual practices to guide you in the work for racial justice.
COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

- Be open, in process, curious, and willing to take risks
- Productive discomfort
- Cultivate praxis - learn, reflect, take action, repeat
WORKSHOP OUTLINE

01 What is spirituality?

02 What is racism?

03 Why consider racism through the lens of spirituality?

04 Connecting spirituality and anti-racist action
What is spirituality? And how is it different from religion?
DEFINITIONS

RELIGION
An institutionalized set of stories, values, actions, attitudes, and rituals concerning ultimate reality held in common by a group of people

SPIRITUALITY
More on this in just a moment...
At its most basic level, spirituality refers to the orientation and action of one's spirit.

At its most basic meaning, the “spirit” refers to one’s orientation toward and relationship with life, including one’s self, others, and the world. Spirit manifests in a person’s thinking, attitudes, emotions, and actions—and is therefore not just about thoughts or attitudes, but also practices and behaviors.
02 WHAT IS RACISM?
Think of racism at three different levels:

- Inter/Personal
- Institutional
- Cultural/systemic
## RACISM DEFINED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inter/Personal</th>
<th>Institutional</th>
<th>Cultural/Systemic</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>ideas, attitudes, and/or behaviors toward people of color that are formed by prejudice and stereotypes and lead to power and oppression.</td>
<td>racist ideas, attitudes, and/or behaviors become embedded in the “policies, procedures, and practices” of institutions and thereby confer advantages to white people and disadvantages to POC.</td>
<td>Interpersonal and institutional forms of racism combine to create cultural racism; when racist ideas and attitudes are embedded in the dominant culture in a way that systematically privileges whiteness and oppresses POC.</td>
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**Examples:**
- microaggressions in the classroom
- racial inequities in schools
- School-to-prison pipeline

See [www.showingupforracialjustice.org](http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org) for more.
RAcism defined
See www.dismantlingracism.org/racism-defined.html for more

INSTITUTIONAL
Policies, practices

Inter/Personal
Institutional
Cultural/systemic

How are People of Color:
Excluded
Underserved
Financially Exploited
Oppressed/Invalidated

How are white people:
Included
Served
Financially Resourced
Uplifted/Validated

PERSONAL - individual acts
How are individuals accountable to each other and to racial justice?

CULTURAL
beliefs, values, norms
How do community beliefs, values, norms validate whiteness and invalidate People and Communities of Color?
Racism/Antiracism

**Racism**
“a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities”

**Antiracism**
“a powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist ideas”
RACE IDENTITY OF PEOPLE KILLED BY POLICE

Black people were killed 3.23 times more often than people white.

6.78 Black people per million

3.2 Latinx people per million

2.07 White people per million
Why consider racism through the lens of spirituality?
“...This moment we’re in is not just a social crisis and not just a political crisis. It’s a spiritual crisis.”

ISABEL WILKERSON
“Albert Einstein once noted, ‘The world we have created is a product of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.’ Then he added, ‘No problem can be solved at the level of consciousness that created it.’ So if we want to change the world, we need a new way of seeing, a new way of being, a new way of loving, a new way of living.”

FR. BRYAN MASSINGALE
“I mean, to be honest with you, so many of us in the Black Lives Matter movement have either been pushed out of the church because many of us are queer and out... But that hasn’t stopped us from being deeply spiritual in this work. And I think, for us, that looks like healing justice work... I believe that this work of Black Lives Matter is actually healing work. It’s not just about policy. It’s why, I think, some people get so confused by us. They’re like, ‘Where’s the policy?’ I’m like, ‘You can’t policy your racism away.’ We no longer have Jim Crow laws, but we still have Jim Crow hate.”

PATRISSE CULLORS
"Racism can well be that corrosive evil that will bring down the curtain on Western civilization. Arnold Toynbee has said that some twenty-six civilizations have risen upon the face of the earth. Almost all of them have descended into the junk heaps of destruction. The decline and fall of these civilizations, according to Toynbee, was not caused by external invasions but by internal decay. They failed to respond creatively to the challenges impinging upon them. If Western civilization does not now respond constructively to the challenge to banish racism, some future historian will have to say that a great civilization died because it lacked the soul and commitment to make justice a reality for all men."

REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
Greed
Egotism
Ignorance
Fear
Comfort/convenience
Privilege
Pride
RACISM

Spiritual causes

Spiritual effects
“Few of us seem to realize how insidious, how radical, how universal an evil racism is. Few of us realize that racism is man’s gravest threat to man, the maximum of hatred for a minimum of reason, the maximum of cruelty for a minimum of thinking.”

RABBI ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

“I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly, is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with the pain.”

JAMES BALDWIN
"Ignorance of each other is what has made unity impossible in the past. Therefore, we need enlightenment. We need more light about each other. Light creates understanding, understanding creates love, love creates patience, and patience creates unity. Once we have more knowledge (light) about each other, we will stop condemning each other and a United front will be brought about."

MALCOLM X
“We cannot always control the streets, but in our homes and in our table, talk! Our children must know where our hearts are. Even if our hands are bound, even if we don't know exactly what to do, we can teach them that no racist remark will go unanswered, and no denigration of another people will go unchallenged. It is important for our children to know that we Jews don't act that way; that we Jews don't talk that way.”

RABBI HAROLD SCHULWEIS
What does spirituality have to offer to antiracist work?

Can antiracism be a spiritual practice?
OSMM FRAMEWORK FOR SPIRITUALITY & MEANING-MAKING

1. Attention
2. Reflection
3. Intention
4. Action
ALPHABET OF VALUES ACTIVITY

- You are invited to read through the list and identify your top 5 core values.

- First, go through the list and write down all the values that resonate with you. If one of your core values is missing, write it in!

- Then review your list of narrowed down values and select the top 10 that feel most important.

- Finally, review that list once more and select the 5 values that are most core to your understanding of yourself.
ALPHABET OF VALUES ACTIVITY

- Adaptability
- Advocacy
- Authenticity
- Beauty
- Challenge
- Compassion
- Community
- Contribute
- Conformity
- Cooperation
- Courageous
- Creativity
- Diversity
- Education
- Efficiency
- Encourage
- Equality
- Equanimity
- Fairness
- Freedom
- Fun
- Generosity
- Gratitude
- Hard-working
- Honesty
- Humor
- Humility
- Inclusion
- Independence
- Justice
- Kindness
- Leading
- Loving
- Mindfulness
- Nonviolent
- Nurturing
- Organized
- Passion
- Patient
- Persistent
- Protect
- Quiet
- Reconciliation
- Resilient
- Sanctity
- Responsible
- Self-aware
- Self-control
- Service
- Trust
- Uniqueness
- Unity
- Vulnerability
- Wellbeing
- Xenial *(hospitable; opposite of xenophobic)*
- Yearning
- Zealous
- Other personal value(s)
FOR MORE REFLECTION AND SHARING

DROP A NOTE IN THE CHAT

Name a core value.

What does your value(s) mean to you?

How might you use your values to guide you in antiracist work?
Multiple Paths

- Weavers
- Experimenters
- Frontline Responders
- Visionaries
- Builders
- Caregivers
- Disruptors
- Healers
- Storytellers
- Guides

Adapted from https://buildingmovement.org/our-work/movement-building/solidarity-is/
Multiple Paths

Weavers see connections between people, places, organizations, ideas, and movements and actively strive to build connections.

Adapted from Building Movement Project

buildingmovement.org
Experi-m
enters

Experimenters innovate, pioneer, and invent. They seek novel solutions by taking risks, learning from failure, and course-correcting as needed.

Adapted from Building Movement Project
buildingmovement.org
Frontline responders address community crises by marshaling and organizing resources, people, networks, and/or messages.

Adapted from Building Movement Project buildingmovement.org
MULTIPLE PATHS

VISIONARIES

Visionaries imagine and generate bold possibilities, hopes, and dreams. They remind us of our values and our goals.

Adapted from Building Movement Project buildingmovement.org
MULTIPLE PATHS

BUILDERS
 Builders use their specialized skills to develop, organize, and implement ideas, practices, people, and resources in service of the collective vision.

Adapted from Building Movement Project
buildingmovement.org
CAREGIVERS
Caregivers nurture and nourish the people around them by creating and sustaining communities of care, joy, and connection.

Adapted from Building Movement Project
buildingmovement.org
Multiple Paths

Disruptors

Disruptors take uncomfortable and risky actions to shake up the status quo, to raise awareness, and to build power.

Adapted from Building Movement Project buildingmovement.org
MULTIPLE PATHS

HEALERS

Healers recognize and tend to past and present trauma caused by oppressive policies, systems, institutions, and practices. They create spaces to hold people and their pain.

Adapted from Building Movement Project
buildingmovement.org
MULTIPLE PATHS

STORYTELLERS

Storytellers craft and share community narratives, cultures, experiences, histories, and possibilities through the arts: music, video, poetry, visual art, movement, etc.

Adapted from Building Movement Project
buildingmovement.org
Guides accompany us on the journey by teaching, counseling, and advising. They use their gifts of discernment and wisdom to clarify and redirect along the way.

Adapted from Building Movement Project
buildingmovement.org
SIX VIRTUES FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

- From OnBeing’s Civil Conversations Project

Words that Matter
"Words have the force of action and become virtues in and of themselves."

Patience
“A spiritual view of time is a long view of time”

Hospitality
“Hospitality is a bridge to all the great virtues, but it is immediately accessible.

Generous Listening
“It is about presence as much as receiving; it is about connection more than observing.”

Humility
“Spiritual humility is not about getting small. It is about encouraging others to be big.

Adventurous civility
“The adventure of civility for our time can’t be a mere matter of politeness or niceness”
Values are only “valuable” when they lead us to intentional action.
Racism didn’t start with the murder of George Floyd...
A few of the historic political and sociopolitical efforts which have contributed to systemic inequities and institutionalized racism perpetuated against Black people.

The Middle Passage
Slavery
The Three-Fifths Compromise
Jim Crow
The Tuskegee Experiment
“Separate but Equal”
The Murder of Emmett Till
Civil Rights Movement
The Fight Against School Desegregation
Redlining
The Assassinations of MLK and Malcolm X
The War on Drugs

The Central Park 5
Mass Incarceration
The School-to-Prison Pipeline
The Watts Uprisings
The Rodney King Uprisings
Proposition 209
Hurricane Katrina
The Birther Movement
The Murder of Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland (to name a few)
Voter Suppression

The Charleston, S.C. Church Shooting
Charlottesville
The Colin Kaepernick Protest
COVID-19 and health inequities for communities of color
Police brutality
The Deployment of Military and Militia Against Protesters Demanding Justice, Accountability, and Systemic change for Blacks
Spirituality & Social/Racial Justice Resources:

- Jewish resources:
  - Jewish Social Justice Roundtable [https://jewishsocialjustice.org/](https://jewishsocialjustice.org/)
Spirituality & Social/Racial Justice Resources:

- General resources:
  - OnBeing Civil Conversations Project [https://onbeing.org/civil-conversations-project/](https://onbeing.org/civil-conversations-project/)
  - and [https://onbeing.org/starting-points/social-healing/](https://onbeing.org/starting-points/social-healing/)
  - Building Movement’s *Solidarity Is* [www.buildingmovement.org](http://www.buildingmovement.org)
  - Spirituality & Practice “Racism” website [https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/explorations/topics/racism/quotes](https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/explorations/topics/racism/quotes)
  - Revolutionary Love Project [https://revolutionaryloveproject.com](https://revolutionaryloveproject.com)
  - Faith matters network [https://www.faithmattersnetwork.org/our-vision](https://www.faithmattersnetwork.org/our-vision)
  - Talking About Race (Smithsonian) [https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/being-antiracist](https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/being-antiracist)
CLOSING REFLECTION
THANKS

Do you have any questions?
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