

Praise me, says God, and I will know that you love me. Curse me, says God, and I will know that you love me. Praise me or curse me And I will know that you love me. Sing out my graces, says God, Raise your fist against me and revile, says God. Sing out graces or revile, Reviling is also a kind of praise, says God. But if you sit fenced off in your apathy, says God, If you sit entrenched in: "I don't give a damn," says God, If you look at the stars and yawn, If you see suffering and don't cry out, If you don't praise and you don't revile, Then I created you in vain, says God. (Aaron Zeitlin)

Sha'ar mourns the recent, senseless deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor. We grieve over the violent, murderous racism that has plagued our country for over 400 years.

אל מלא רחמים, שוכן במרומים, המצא מנוחה נכונה תחת כנפי השכינה במעלות קדושים וטהורים כזהר הרקיע מזהירים, את נשמות כל אחינו בני ארצנו, אנשים נשים וטרף, שנהרגו, שגשרפו, שנתלו ונחנקו מפני גזענות ושנאת חנם, בגן עדן תהי מנוחתם. אנא בעל הרחמים, הסתירם בסתר כנפיד לעולמים וצור בצרור החיים את נשמותיהם. ה' הוא נחלתם, וינחו בשלום על משכבותיהם. ונאמר אמן

*God full of compassion, dwelling on High,
find perfect rest beneath the sheltering wings of Your Presence,
among the holy and the pure who shine with the light of the heavens,
for the souls of our brothers and sisters, our neighbors,
men, women, and children, who have been
killed, burned, and lynched
because of racism and baseless hate.
May the Garden of Eden be their resting place.
Oh please, Master of compassion,
keep them in the shelter of Your wings for eternity
and bind up their souls in the bond of life.
Adonai is their inheritance; may they rest in peace, and let us say,
Amen.*

But it is not enough to mourn. We've done that before. Sadly, we'll likely mourn again. COVID-19 sheltering requirements impel most of us to restrain our instinct to rush out and protest, embrace, or volunteer right now. But it may provide us with the quiet and time to consider a response with longer-term impact. For many, now may not be the time for immediate, proximate consolation which is painful to accept. But it might be the time to finally make the systemic changes that will more likely prevent us from being back here again.

Think about the world you want to emerge into when this health-crisis is over. What does equality really look like? How does justice truly get implemented? Who has the vision and power to dismantle institutionalized racism in our country that perpetuates unequal access to clean natural resources, healthcare, education, jobs, and housing?

How will you vote? How will you spend your money in the service of healing the chronic disease of hatred from whose symptoms none of us are immune? Injustice hurts more than those treated unjustly. It sickens and weakens us all.

Woe unto any of us who emerge from this public health crisis unchanged. Woe unto any of us who emerge from yet another racial crisis unchanged. Woe unto any of us who yawn in self-assurance knowing **we** are not racists, but who refrain from actively combatting racism. Woe unto any of us who fails to prove the worthiness of our having been created and who takes our lives, and our privilege for granted.

“The historical record — for tolerance, for human learning — is not promising. Yet I believe, more than ever, that at the bottom of each human being there is a reset button. Undeniably it is difficult to get to. To reach it seems to require that the ego be demolished by circumstance. But reach that button and press it, and the world might reshape itself.” Tony Hoagland.

Now is the time to reset. Our country is crying out for real change. Our country is crying out for us. Are we listening?

Log on and learn about some of the important work being done. Find your way to be part of the change.

<https://ejj.org/>

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<https://www.naacp.org/issues/environmental-justice/>

<https://colorofchange.org/>