

Recent events following the murder of George Floyd and many other Black Americans have amplified the movement to seek racial justice and for all. In response, Congregation Adath Jeshurun's Social Action Committee drafted the following position statement which was unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees on July 23, 2020:

CONGREGATION ADATH JESHURUN - STATEMENT ON RACIAL EQUALITY

The Book of Deuteronomy of our Bible teaches: "Justice, Justice shall you pursue." We the Jewish people have a religious and moral obligation to pursue justice for ourselves and for all people. This applies especially to those whom justice has been denied and inequitably administered. For us to not do so would be to fail in our obligation to follow God's command. If we are to walk in God's path, we are required to take action to bring justice to all.

We at Congregation Adath Jeshurun, a Hebrew phrase meaning "congregation of the upright," recognize our responsibility to strive to fulfill God's mandate: "Justice, Justice shall you pursue....". We accept our collective and individual responsibility to acknowledge that Black individuals continue to suffer hate, discrimination, and a law enforcement system that too often deprives them of justice. Much as our God heard the cries of our ancestors in Egypt, we today hear the cries and wailing of the Black community. We acknowledge to the Black community that we hear your pleas to live your lives in peace, free from wrongful government action, free from economic repression, and free from intimidation, abuse, and fear as you walk on the streets and sleep in your homes. We recognize and agree that your voices must now be heard in order to generate necessary change.

We affirm our obligation to learn about racial diversity, confront our implicit biases, challenge the deep systemic and cultural sources of those biases, and address the racial disparities that plague our society. While we understand that change will not be easy, it is our sacred obligation to change our behavior and the structures that perpetuate racial injustice.

We rededicate ourselves to work side by side with the Black community, who have been deprived of justice. We extend our hand, our hearts, and our very spirit to join together with the righteous citizens of Louisville to create an environment for all to live closer to God's command. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who walked with Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and John Lewis of blessed memory, taught us that "indifference to evil is worse than evil itself, that in a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible."

We acknowledge that Judaism is more than daily, Sabbath, and Holy Day observances and rituals. All of these practices are beautiful; they add needed holiness to our lives and motivate us to the daily practice of goodness, justice and decency for all, Jew, Christian, Muslim, and others, all of whom are created in the image of God.

We accept responsibility to pursue justice with those who will work with us. We recognize that our shared destiny is inextricably bound to the just treatment of the Black community. As we have learned from our own history, when others suffer, we too will suffer. Let us work together to ensure justice for all in our community, to create a more perfect world, and change the individual "you" to the collective "we."