

## **We Will Not Stand Idly By**

Many of you have been sharing your deep concern and heartbreak resulting from what we are learning about the systemic and violent racism prevalent in our country. The images on the television and news reports have been so disturbing. We will be including some prayers and liturgy this Erev Shabbat created for this moment.

Please read the press release that was issued by the *Union for Reform Judaism* just a few days ago. Our social action committee will be discussing some opportunities to act together during this challenging time. If you'd like to learn more about suggestions proposed by the *Religious Action Center*, please follow the links you will find at the bottom of this message. Our Social Action committee is planning our engagement in the *Every Voice, Every Vote* campaign and other efforts to ensure voting rights. At our next meeting we will be planning our next steps as a congregation. You will soon be learning about more opportunities to act together.

Blessings,  
Rabbis Paula, Rabbi Shifra and Rabbi Rick

May 30, 2020; New York, NY

Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, director of the *Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism* and Senior Vice President of the *Union for Reform Judaism*, issued the following statement:

On Shavuot, as we received the Torah anew, with its unbending demand for justice, we also witnessed protests in Minneapolis, Louisville, and around the United States following the all-too-familiar lethargy in bringing George Floyd's killers to justice.

The national rage expressed about the murder of Mr. Floyd reflects the depth of pain over the injustice that People of Color – and particularly Black men – have been subjected to throughout the generations. In recent months we have seen, yet again, too many devastating examples of persistent systemic racism, leading to the deaths not only of Mr. Floyd but of other precious souls, including Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery.

We remember others before them: Eric Garner. Tamir Rice. Trayvon Martin. Sandra Bland. Oscar Grant. Philando Castile. Walter Scott. Terrence Crutcher. Samuel Dubose. Michael Brown. The list feels endless, and so too is our despair. But as we recite the Mourner's Kaddish for them all, we say now, again: We will not sit idly by.

Our country simply cannot achieve the values of "justice for all" to which it aspires until we address ongoing racism in all sectors and at all levels of society. We remain in solidarity and action with the NAACP's the NAACP's urgent #WeAreDoneDying campaign, whose policy demands cover areas of criminal justice, economic justice, health care, and voting, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disproportionately impact Black Americans. As the NAACP says, "Senseless hate crimes and incidence of COVID-19 cases

and deaths spreading throughout the Black community display the continuance of systematic racism and privilege granted to white people in America.”

We pray for the families of Mr. Floyd, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Arbery, and all those whose lives have been so cruelly and violently taken, and we renew our commitment to working to achieve a nation that exemplifies compassion and justice for all.

The blog titled [Ways Your Congregation Can Act Now for Racial Justice](#) is a helpful compilation of resources. Within it are a few things your congregation can do now, as well as information about upcoming resources, announcements, and other opportunities from the *URJ* and our partner organizations. Included in this blog is an [action alert](#) to urge congress to enact policing reform, which is something you can do right now. We hope these resources help you care for your community.