

חי

Light a Candle for Black Lives: 18 Minutes of Action

a JFREJ ritual toolkit

Introduction

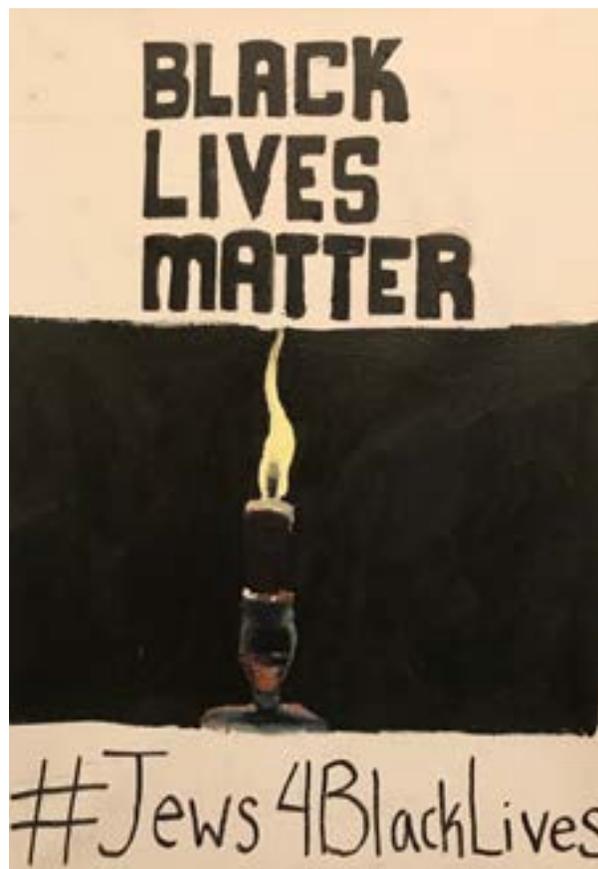
WHY 18 MINUTES?

In Jewish practice, the eighteen minutes between candle lighting and the beginning of Shabbat are considered a time for heightened creativity, the last moments of work before holy rest. It is a cornerstone of the home practice preserved by so many marginalized voices in Jewish tradition—a way to affirm connection to our communities in this moment of home-based practice.

In our sacred narratives, these 18 minutes are a time-out-of-time, a mystical and generative moment of creation. It was in these 18 minutes that unrevealed aspects of the world were fashioned, just before the first Shabbat. Now, we use the 18 minutes for creative work towards an as-yet unrevealed world of justice, where the New York City budget reflects the needs of its people, where the NYPD is defunded, and where Black Lives are uplifted as sacred.

18 is also a symbol of *chai*, of life.

Light a candle for Black Lives nightly at the beginning of New York's curfew, and spend 18 minutes engaged in home-based action with #DefundTheNYPD and #Jews4BlackLives.



COVER: CHAI / LIFE, EIGHTEEN
CALLIGRAPHY BY ARIELLE TONKIN

LAURA WEIL

CANDLELIGHTING

AS YOU LIGHT THE CANDLE we offer the following words of intention:

Hineni—here I am—humble in all that I do not know, but willing and ready to do the holy work of justice. In committing myself to this act, I make concrete my pledge to a life in pursuit of justice and truth, as I acknowledge that this is just one step toward creating a world in which black lives can flourish.

הניני

To say *hineni* is to recall the past while rooting ourselves in the present and looking toward the future. We come to it humbly—as individuals—yet in speaking the words into existence we are forming ourselves into a powerful collective.

In lighting the candle we designate place and transition into a sacred space where our possible futures are boundless. The fire itself is symbolic of this paradox between present and potential—the inner flame is constant while its exterior is always in motion, just as our intentions are steadfastly committed to a shifting world.



IF YOU DON'T HAVE A CANDLE

Light incense, center yourself through breathwork (inhale through your nose over the count of 4, hold the breath in for a count of 6, and exhale through your mouth over the count of 8), or simply set a timer for 18 minutes.

Whatever you do, do it with the intention of delineating time and dispelling distractions, in order to center yourself more fully on the work.

ILLUSTRATION BY SAM FINE
CALLIGRAPHY BY ARIELLE TONKIN

PRAYERS

PERSONAL PRAYERS FOR OUR WORLD

Tkhnines are Yiddish supplication prayers that historically have been written by women and that invite people of all genders to appeal to God in personal moments of pain, joy, and longing. For this at-home ritual in this time of home-based Judaism, we raise up the spiritual tools our ancestors have given us; tools that empower us to live meaningful Jewish lives in the home.

AS THE 18 MINUTES COME TO A CLOSE

We call on the words of our ancestors to pray for the end of this pandemic, so that all who are able might be safe to gather in sacred protest speedily and in our days!

As we invoke these words, we also pray for a swift end to white supremacy and racial injustice, which plague our world.

TKHNINES FOR A PANDEMIC

Selections and Illuminations on "A tkhine when an epidemic breaks out" (1916)

Do not take, Good God, our beloved and dear ones from us, and do not take from them those who are beloved and dear to them; command the Destroying Angel to place his sword back in his sheath and no longer rob parents of their children and children of their parents. Send a complete healing to the sick, and protect and preserve those who have not contracted the illness so that they do not, God forbid, become ill.

Nem, guter got, fun undz nit avek undzere libe un tayere un nem fun zey nit avek di vos zaynen bay zey lib un tayer; gib a befel tsum malekh hamashkhis er zol araynton zayn shverd in zayn sheyd un er zol mer nit beroybn eltern fun kinder un kinder fun eltern. Shik a refue shleymeh tsu di kranke un behit un veshirem di gezunte az zey zoln kholile nit krank vern.

נעהם, גוטער גאָט, פֿון אונז ניט אַוועק אונזערע ליבע און טהייערע און נעהם פֿון זיי ניט אַוועק די וואָס זיינען ביי זיי ליבע און טהייער גיעב אַ בעפעהל צום מלאַך המַשְׁחִית ער זאָל אַרײַנטהאַן זײַן שווערד אין זײַן שײד און ער זאָל מעהר ניט בערויבען עלטערען פֿון קינדער און קינדער פֿון עלטערען. שיק אַ רפּוּאַה שְׁלִימָה צו די קראַנקע און בעהיט און בעשירם די געזונטע אַז זיי זאָלען חֲלִילָה ניט קראַנק ווערען

May your good angels give soundness of mind to the healers so that they find full healing for the sick of your people, and send the correct remedy to all those ill. “Remember us for life, Majesty who desires life” — and may no sickness or epidemic have power over us or our young children. May none of us be torn away from the world before our time and may no one go missing within our boundaries, so that we are able to serve you with joyful hearts. “Heal us Hashem and we will be healed” — heal us, dear God, with bodily healing, and we will be healed with the healing of the soul, Amen and Amen.

Zoln dayne mlokhim arayngebn a zinen di refoyim az zey zoln tsutrefn di rikhtige refue shleyneh lkholey amekhoh, un shik di emese refue tsu ale khoylim. Zokbrenu l'khayim melekh khafets b'khayim un zoln kayne makhlos un mageyfes shult zayn af undz un undzere kinderlekh. Zol keyner fun undz obgerisn vern fun der velt far der tsayt un zol keyner nit feln in undzer gvul, kdey mir zoln dir kenen dinen ir freylikhe hertser. Refaynu hashem v'neyrofe, heyl undz, gotenyu, refues haguf, un mir vern refues hanefesh, omen v'omen.

זאלען דינע גוטע מלאכים אריינגעבען א זינען די רופאים אז זיי זאלען צוטרעפען די ריכטיגע רפואה שלימה לחולי עמך, און שיק די אמת'ע רפואה צו אלע חולאים. זכרנו לחיים מלך חפץ בחיים און זאלען קיינע מחלות און מגפות שולט זיין אויף אונז און אונזערע קינדערלאך. זאל קיינער פון אונז אבגעריסען ווערען פון דער וועלט פאר דער צייט און זאל קיינער ניט פעהלען אין אונזער גבול, כדי מיר זאלען דיר קענען דינען איר פעהרליכע הערצעה. רפאנו ה' ונרפא, הייל אונז, גאטעניו, רפואת הגוף און מיר ווערען רפואת הנפש, אמן ואמן:

TKHINE FOR PROTEST

Our God and God of our ancestors, Majesty who desires life, may you spread your sheltering wings over the protesters in the streets. May our combined actions this evening and every day bring more light into your broken world, as this candle lights my home tonight.



Ritual Team

This ritual was crafted by Evan Chester,
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Design Team

This booklet was designed by Samantha Fine,
Elana Hubert, and Baci Weiler, with support
from Tom Haviv & Rebecca Katz

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JEW^s FOR BLACK LIVES

