

הנה מה טוב
ומה נעים
שבת אחים
גם יחד

Personal &
Professional Meetings

a JFREJ ritual toolkit

Introduction

Meetings are a sacrifice: of time, of effort, of energy. Jews acknowledge that all kinds of work are fundamental to life. Participation in more mundane aspects of organizing for social change, such as attending meetings, speaks to a Jewish tradition of being an active participation in our communities working for righteousness, justice, and repair. This toolkit is intended for use in meetings both personal and professional, that we may presence to groundedness in service of justice for Black lives and our collective liberation. It is an offering for moments of uncertainty and exhaustion just as much as for moments of joy and celebration. Please feel free to pick and choose from what's available to suit your needs and the needs of those with whom you are meeting, and please also feel welcome to adapt these *brachot* (blessings) and *kavanot* (intentions) to use whatever language around divinity resonates most for you.

Love work, hate lordship,
and seek no intimacy with ruling power.

Pirkei Avot

COVER: HINEI MAH TOV UMAH NA'IM SHEVET ACHIM GAM YACHAD /
HOW GOOD AND PLEASANT IT IS WHEN PEOPLE COME TOGETHER
CALLIGRAPHY BY ARIELLE TONKIN

BEGINNING THE MEETING

At the beginning of the meeting, we ground ourselves, dedicate our learning, and set intentions (*kavanot*).

Say aloud or read on your own:

1. PRAYER OF A CHAIRWOMAN BEFORE THE MEETING

by Bertha Pappenheim, January 1928

Strength, Strength
Send with me the flame on my journey
So that its light may show me the way
And I will not err from the path
Through you, to you.

Strength, Strength
Help me amid the tangle of voices
So that I do not, misled by the noise
Fail to find the words,
Through you, to you.

Strength, Strength
Let me, in breath and heartbeat
Be filled by the rhythm
That carries justice and truth
From you, to you.

2. SHEHECHEYANU if it is the group's first meeting

This is a prayer of thanks that Jews all around the world say upon the beginning of an occasion.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהִחַיֵּנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּישָׁנוּ לְזֵמַן הַזֶּה

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh.

Blessed is the unity of all, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this occasion.

3. DEDICATION OF TIME

It is traditional in some communities to dedicate one's learning to someone whose name they want to lift up. In that spirit, we invite dedications of time.

E.g., My name is [your name] and I am dedicating my time at this meeting to [persons' name].

4. KAVANOT / SETTING INTENTIONS

See Appendix for suggested *kavanot*.

5. NAMING THE ENEMY: "God of Vengeance"

After reading the below passage, members of the group are welcomed to dedicate their time in another way, by naming the enemy.

Selections from Psalm 94 (tr. Pamela Greenberg):

The widow and stranger are slain; helpless orphans lie slaughtered. And they said: "God will not see. The Upholder of Jacob will not notice their plight." ...

The courts will once again become righteous, the wise-hearted will walk in their light. Who will rise to my defense against the wrongful? Who will stand for me against those who strive to bring harm? ...

The strength of their corruption will come back to their chests. Let their own wrong annihilate them; let it overthrow their destruction, Holy One, our God.

DURING THE MEETING

TAKE A BREAK

Taking breaks is very Jewish- we even have a whole day of the week dedicated to taking a break (Shabbat)! Please take a break at some point during the meeting to take three grounding, centering breaths.

RETURN TO THE TOPIC AT HAND

If the meeting has gone off track, take pause to read/recite the following:

Sefer Yetzirah 1:8

Stop your mouth from speaking and your heart from ruminating, and if your heart runs, return to the place. This is why it was written: the divine beings ran and returned.

At the end of the meeting, we acknowledge our limits and recommit to ongoing work.

KOL HA'OLAM

This is a saying by an 18th century sage named Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (melody [here](#)).

כָּל הָעוֹלָם כְּלוֹ גֶשֶׁר צָר מְאֹד, וְהִשְׁיָקָר לֹא לְפַחַד כָּלֵל

Kol ha'olam kulo Gesher tzar me'od, veba'ikar lo lefached k'lal

The whole world is a very narrow bridge, and the main thing is to overcome fear!

ACKNOWLEDGING THINGS LEFT UNSAID

We acknowledge that while we have done our best to practice *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) at this meeting today, there is much left unsaid and undone. We honor all that was not said at this meeting.

kavanot (intentions)
for specific situations

For meetings with those you disagree with...

סוכה מט:ב ב 49 Talmud Bavli Sukkah

“To do justly”: this is justice. “To love mercy”: these are acts of kindness.

For encounters with the police...

Lublin, 1939

Mir veln zey iberlebn!

We will outlive them!

For meetings to show solidarity...

רות א:טו Ruth 1:16

For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you will lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your Divine my Divine.

For pursuing justice...

Deuteronomy 16:20 דברים טז:כ

Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

For feeling overwhelmed...

Pirkei Avot 2:16 פרקי אבות ב:טו

לא עָלֶיךָ הַמְלָאכָה לְגַמְרָהּ, וְלֹא אַתָּה בֶן חוֹרִין לְבָטֵל מִמֶּנָּה

Lo aleicha ha'avodah ligmor, velo atah ben chorin libatel mimenah.

It is not your responsibility to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.

For support of protesters...

Psalms 146:7 תהילים קמ"ז

Who secures justice for those who are wronged, gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets prisoners free.

For acknowledging each other and the work we are doing as sacred...

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם שככה לו בעולמו

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, shekacha lo beolamo.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, that such as these are in Your world.

For meetings with elders...

Pirkei Avot 4:1 פרקי אבות ד:א

Ben Zoma said: Who is wise?

He who learns from everyone.

For offering a friend emotional support...

Shir HaShirim 2:10 שיר השירים ב:י

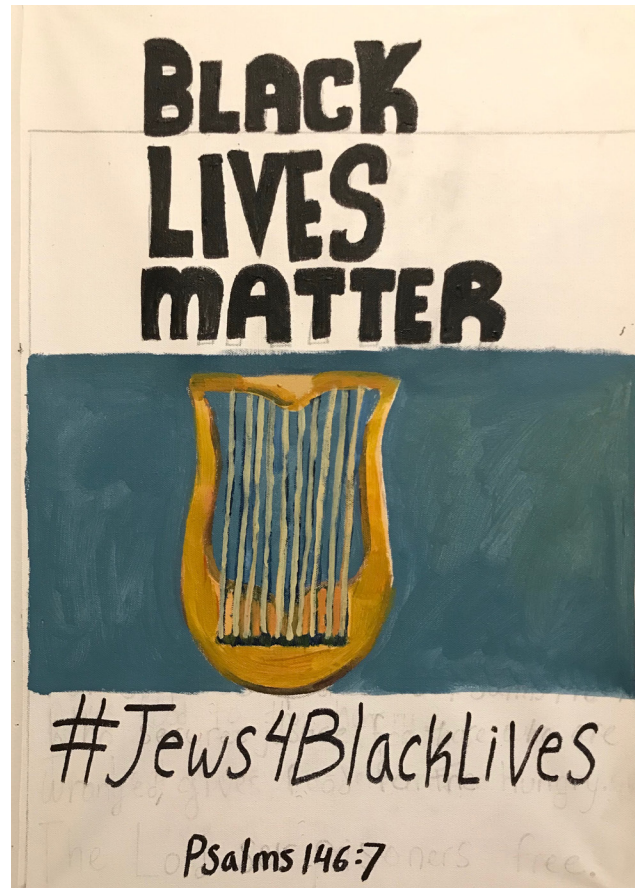
My beloved spoke thus to me,

“Arise, my darling!”

For phone banking...

Jeremiah 20:9 ירמיה כ:ט

But God's word was like a raging fire in my heart, shut up in my bones. I could not contain it; I was helpless.



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JEW **FOR** **BLACK** **LIVES**

