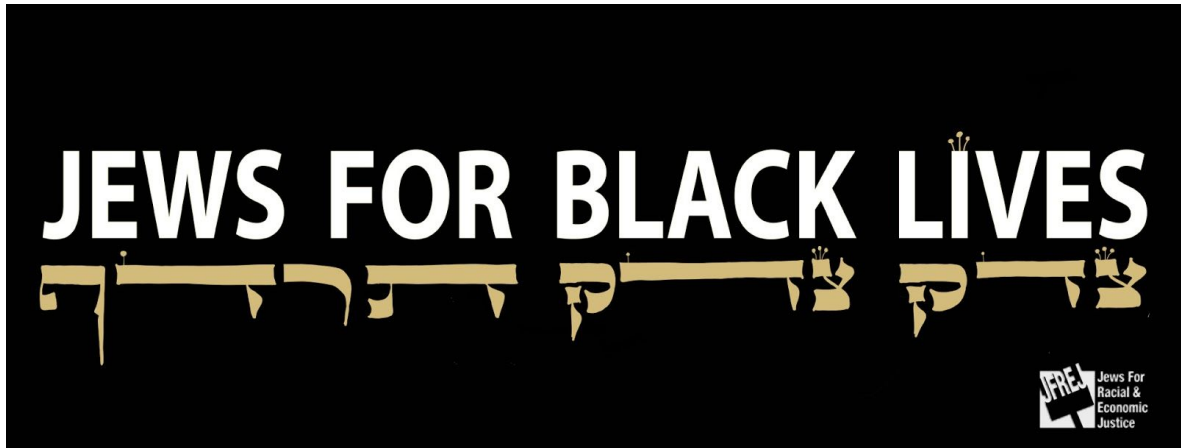


Moments of Radical Rest A Ritual Toolkit for Black Lives Matter on Shabbat



One of the most central tenets of Shabbat is a day of rest. *“Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to God: **you shall not do any work-** you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle or the stranger who is amongst you. For in the six days God made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, **and God rested on the seventh day..”***

Six days a week we take actions of protest, of learning, of working hard to dismantle the systemic racism within us and in the world around us and on Shabbat we pause from traditional ideas of work and do the radical act of rest. As Tricia Hersey, founder of [The Nap Ministry](#) teaches “Rest is a form of resistance because it disrupts and pushes back against capitalism and white supremacy.” We offer here a way to move through the sacred time of shabbat as we prepare for, bring in, sit in, and separate from Shabbat not through the typical forms of activism but rather through dreaming, resting and taking pleasure.

Preparing for Shabbat

As Rabbi Yitz Greenberg writes, “One of the strongest traditions in the Jewish religion is that days of joy and well-being must be shared with others who are less fortunate.” As we prepare to enter Shabbat, to take a breath, to disengage, to rest we are called to act and give and acknowledge that not everyone has the privilege of doing that.

Action: Giving Tzedakah

Here is a small list of suggestions:

[Bail Funds List \(Nationwide and State Specific\)](#), [NAACP Legal Defense Fund](#), [Campaign Zero](#), [Reclaim the Block](#), [Color of Change](#), [Dream Defenders](#), [Equal Justice Initiative](#), [Jews for Racial and Economic Justice \(JFREJ\)](#), [Common Cause](#),

[Black Girls Code](#), [Thurgood Marshall College Fund](#), [Black Maternal Health](#), [National Birth Equity Collaborative](#), [Black Mamas Matter Alliance](#)

During Shabbat

A time to dream, rest, take pleasure

Action: Candle Lighting and Imagining

Our Sages teach us that “Shabbat is one sixtieth of the world to come,” (Tractate Berakhot 57). One of the gifts that abolitionist thought offers us is the ability to imagine a new kind of world, one in which our communities operate on the principles of life rather than death, dignity rather than oppression, and care rather than violence. As you enter Shabbat, before you light candles, pause and imagine what it would be like to be in that world.

1. Think about a book or article you read this week that introduced you to a liberatory idea you had never before imagined could be possible.
2. An image you saw or a sound you heard this week that illustrates for you what a future world could look like.
3. An action you took this week to build that world.

As you light Shabbat candles, feel that world all around you, increasingly real and present. We can taste the World to Come.

Pausing at 8:46

A moment (minute) of silence at 8:46. As is often done in guided meditation, we can use the moment (minute) to focus on our breath - feel gratitude for our breath - that was so cruelly and inhumanely taken from George Floyd over the course of 8 minutes and 46 seconds. It is a specific moment to stop and try to feel a sense of gratitude - a rest within the larger day of rest. As a ritual action, it is designed to be consciousness-raising and encouraging of mindfulness rather than action-based, as the idea of stopping and just *being* seems consistent with the spirit of Shabbat. It is also a recognition that it's hard to know what the right ritual is at this moment, but gratitude is an essential part of a mature spiritual life. We are all fortunate to be breathing.

Pleasure

adrienne maree brown, writes in her book [Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good](#) that “pleasure is a measure of freedom; notice what makes you feel good and what you are curious about; learn ways you can increase the amount of feeling-good time in your life, to have abundant pleasure; decrease any internal or projected shame or scarcity thinking around the pursuit of pleasure, quieting any voices of trauma that keep you from your full sacred sensual life; create more room for joy, wholeness, and aliveness (and less room for oppression, repression, self-denial and unnecessary suffering) in your life; identify strategies beyond denial or repression for navigating pleasure in relationship to others; and begin to understand the liberation possible when we collectively orient around pleasure and longing. Bonus: realize you are a pleasure activist!”

Leaving Shabbat to re-engage with the work ahead

Havdalah offers us a chance to transition from moments of rest to re-engaging with the world and the work ahead. Through the ritual of wine (taste), spices (smell), candle (sight), blessings (hearing), and the holding and touching of each of these objects (touch) we reflect on our physical being. What body do we inhabit? What space do we take up in this world? What voices do we listen to? Whose words do we elevate and share? How do we touch and hold those around us?