

# 8 NIGHTS, 8 ACTIONS

## A Chanukah Dedicated to the Spirit of Resistance and the Movement to End Police Violence



Across the country, people have expressed grief and outrage in response to the grand jury decisions not to indict Darren Wilson and Daniel Pantaleo, the two white police officers who murdered Michael Brown and Eric Garner, both of whom were unarmed black men. Though police killings of people of color — particularly Black people — have impacted communities of color for generations, these recent events have sparked a national outcry and movement.

This Chanukah, we rededicate ourselves to the fight to end police violence and racial profiling.

As we light the Chanukah candles, we remember those who have lost their lives to racist police violence. We remember the lives they lived and the loved ones they left behind, and we dedicate the Chanukah flame to their memory.

As we light the Chanukah candles, we honor the actions of young Black people in Ferguson, MO, whose protests have sparked a national movement for racial justice.

As we light the Chanukah candles, we remind ourselves that police violence can and must stop. Each night we take one

action to move us closer to the world we long for, free of racism, violence and injustice.

Black organizers from Ferguson Action, a central organizing hub in Ferguson, have clearly called for disruptions of business as usual and physical participation through public protests and demonstrations.

This ritual toolkit provides opportunities to join the movement in different ways. Each night we have an option to take different kinds of action in the fight for Black lives, for racial justice, and to continue the call for accountability and justice for all victims of police brutality and violence. This ritual toolkit offers two paths to action: Option 1, a social media action, or Option 2, an activity directed toward the demands of Ferguson Action. We recognize that a successful movement needs many different kinds of contributions. May all of our contributions, whether in our homes or on the streets, bring about a society where Black lives matter.

The idea for this document sprang out of an ad-hoc national coalition of Jewish racial justice organizers. For more information, visit [Chanukahaction.org](http://Chanukahaction.org).

# CHANUKAH BLESSINGS

Each night, candles are placed in the menorah, also called the *chanukiah* (a nine-branched candelabra), from right to left. The *shamash* (taller helper) candle is lit first each night. Then the blessings are recited, after which the *shamash* is used to light the other candles, moving from left to right so that the newest candles is lit first each night. According to the Talmud, the *chanukiah* is placed in front of the house or a window for all to see, unless such exposure might be endangering (*Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 21b*).

## Kavannah/Intention before lighting candles:

נר אלהים נשמת אדם      The light of God is the human soul. —*Proverbs 20:27*

*Read aloud:* As we light each candle, we remember the souls whose light has been extinguished too soon because of police violence. As we create more and more light each night of Chanukah, we commit ourselves to working for police accountability and an end to the systemic racism that has led to the death of too many divine lights.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ  
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה .

*Ba-ruch A-tah Ado-nai, E-lo-he-nu Me-lech ha-olam,  
a-she-ki-de-sha-nu be-mitz-vo-tav, ve-tzi-va-nu le-had-lik ner Cha-nu-kah.*

Blessed are You, Source of All Light, who makes us holy through your mitzvot, and who instructs us to kindle the Chanukah light.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הַהֵם בְּזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה

*Ba-ruch A-tah Ado-nai, E-lo-he-nu Me-lech Ha-olam,  
she-a-sa ni-sim la-avo-te-nu ba-ya-mim ha-hem ba-zman ha-zeh.*

Blessed are You, Source of All Light, who performed miracles for our ancestors in their days at this time.

*On the first night, we say:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁחֲחַיֵּנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה

*Baruch A-tah Ado-nai, E-lo-he-nu Me-lech Ha-olam,  
she-he-hiyanu ve-kiyy'manu ve-hig-gi-anu lazman ha-zeh.*

Blessed are You, Source of All Light, who grants us life, who sustains us, and who brings us to this very moment.

# FIRST NIGHT: PUBLIC OBSERVANCE

*Read aloud:* As we light this candle on the 1st night of Chanukah, we remember Michael Brown. May Michael's memory be for a blessing.

*Recite Chanukah blessings on page 3.*

*Read aloud:* With this dedication we are moved by our Jewish values that teach us, "Justice! Justice you shall pursue!" and tonight we take action to carry out the vision called for by Ferguson Action organizers:

## **FERGUSON ACTION'S VISION: WE WANT JUSTICE FOR MICHAEL BROWN**

### **Options for taking action:**

**Option 1:** *Share the following message on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.):*  
"Justice for Michael Brown. #BlackLivesMatter"

**Option 2:** There is a strong tradition of sharing the miracle of Chanukah, known in the aramaic as *Pirsumei d'Nisa*. The lighting of candles is not meant to be done in private. It is of public concern. It is itself an act of resistance.

On this first night, place a "Black Lives Matter" sign in the window, by your menorah. Make your own sign or download a sign at: <http://bit.ly/12WMAKw>.



## SECOND NIGHT: GENERATE LIGHT

*Read aloud:* As we light this candle on the 2nd night of Chanukah, we remember Yvette Smith. May Yvette's memory be for a blessing.

*Recite Chanukah blessings on page 3.*

*Read aloud:* With this dedication we are moved by our Jewish values that teach us, "Justice! Justice you shall pursue!" and tonight we take action to carry out the vision called for by Ferguson Action organizers:



### **FERGUSON ACTION'S VISION: WE WANT FREEDOM FOR OUR COMMUNITIES**

#### **Options for taking action:**

**Option 1:** *Share the following message on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.):*

"I support Ferguson Action's Vision for a New America: [www.fergusonaction.com/demands](http://www.fergusonaction.com/demands)."

**Option 2:** Visit the website for Ferguson Action ([www.fergusonaction.com](http://www.fergusonaction.com)). Familiarize yourself with their messages and demands.

# THIRD NIGHT: NOT BY MIGHT

*Read aloud:* As we light this candle on the 3rd night of Chanukah, we dedicate this flame to the memory of Aiyana Mo’Nay Stanley Jones. May Aiyana’s memory be for a blessing.

*Recite Chanukah blessings on page 3.*

*Read aloud:* With this dedication we are moved by our Jewish values that teach us, “Justice! Justice you shall pursue!” and tonight we take action to carry out the first of six demands called for by Ferguson Action organizers:

## **FERGUSON ACTION’S DEMAND #1: THE DE-MILITARIZATION OF LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACROSS THE COUNTRY.**

### **Options for taking action:**

**Option 1:** *Share the following message on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.):*

“I support Ferguson Action’s call for the de-militarization of local law enforcement across the country. [www.fergusonaction.com/demands](http://www.fergusonaction.com/demands)”

**Option 2:** Contact your representative and senators and urge them to support the Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act of 2014. You can find further information and an online tool for contacting your elected representatives about this issue at: <http://bit.ly/1uHiMYN>.

# FOURTH NIGHT: KINDLING HOPE

*Read aloud:* As we light this candle on the 4th night of Chanukah, we remember Rekia Boyd. May Rekia's memory be for a blessing.

*Recite Chanukah blessings on page 3.*

*Read aloud:* With this dedication we are moved by our Jewish values that teach us, "Justice! Justice you shall pursue!" and tonight we take action to carry out the second of six demands called for by Ferguson Action organizers:

## **FERGUSON ACTION'S DEMAND #2: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF SYSTEMIC ABUSES BY LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS, INCLUDING THE PUBLICATION OF DATA RELATING TO RACIALLY BIASED POLICING, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF BEST PRACTICES.**

### **Options for taking action:**

**Option 1:** *Share the following message on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.):*

"I support Ferguson Action's call for a Comprehensive Review of systemic abuses by local police departments, including the publication of data relating to racially biased policing, and the development of best practices. [www.fergusonaction.com/demands](http://www.fergusonaction.com/demands)"

**Option 2:** The Department of Justice has been identified as a primary target in the fight to end racialized police violence. This Chanukah, contact the Department of Justice and voice your support for change. Here is a sample script you can use:

"Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling to urge the Department of Justice to:  
Conduct a comprehensive review of systemic abuses by local police departments  
Publish data related to racially biased policing  
Develop best practices for racially just law enforcement  
Repurpose funds to support community-based alternatives to incarceration."

You may contact the Department of Justice at: 202-353-1555 or by email at [AskDOJ@usdoj.gov](mailto:AskDOJ@usdoj.gov).

# FIFTH NIGHT: GIVE GELT

*Read aloud:* As we light this candle on the 5th night of Chanukah, we remember Tamir Rice. May Tamir's memory be for a blessing.

*Recite Chanukah blessings on page 3.*

*Read aloud:* With this dedication we are moved by our Jewish values that teach us, "Justice! Justice you shall pursue!" and tonight we take action to carry out the third of six demands called for by Ferguson Action organizers:

**FERGUSON ACTION'S DEMAND #3:  
REPURPOSING OF LAW ENFORCEMENT FUNDS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY BASED  
ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION AND THE CONDITIONING OF DEPARTMENT  
OF JUSTICE FUNDING ON THE ENDING OF DISCRIMINATORY POLICING AND THE  
ADOPTION OF DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BEST PRACTICES.**

**Options for taking action:**

**Option 1:** *Share the following message on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.):*

"I support Ferguson Action's call for the repurposing of law enforcement funds for community based alternatives to incarceration and the conditioning of Department of Justice funding on the ending of discriminatory policing and the adoption of Department of Justice best practices. [www.fergusonaction.com/demands](http://www.fergusonaction.com/demands)"

**Option 2:** In the U.S., the tradition of giving gifts has become a cornerstone of Chanukah celebrations. This year, having called on the Department of Justice to repurpose resources and fund community-based alternatives to incarceration, let us also repurpose some of our own financial resources. Please donate an amount that feels significant to you to Ferguson Action's Jail Fund or Movement Infrastructure Fund. You can make an online donation at: [www.fergusonaction.com](http://www.fergusonaction.com).

# SIXTH NIGHT: IN OUR TIMES

*Read aloud:* As we light this candle on the 6th night of Chanukah, we remember Tarika Wilson. May Tarika's memory be for a blessing.

*Recite Chanukah blessings on page 3.*

*Read aloud:* With this dedication we are moved by our Jewish values that teach us, "Justice! Justice you shall pursue!" and tonight we take action to carry out the fourth of six demands called for by Ferguson Action organizers:

## **FERGUSON ACTION'S DEMAND #4: A CONGRESSIONAL HEARING INVESTIGATING THE CRIMINALIZATION OF COMMUNITIES OF COLOR, RACIAL PROFILING, POLICE ABUSES AND TORTURE BY LAW ENFORCEMENT.**

### **Options for taking action:**

**Option 1:** *Share the following message on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.):*

"I support Ferguson Action's call for a congressional hearing investigating the criminalization of communities of color, racial profiling, police abuses and torture by law enforcement. [www.fergusonaction.com/demands](http://www.fergusonaction.com/demands)"

**Option 2:** Gather with friends and family to discuss the ways that institutional racism creates the conditions for the criminalization of communities of color. Contact your congressional representative and urge them to support a Congressional Hearing investigating the criminalization of communities of color, racial profiling, police abuses and torture by law enforcement. You can find contact information for your congressional representative at: <http://1.usa.gov/1GGlBA6> and <http://1.usa.gov/1GnZr7i>.



# SEVENTH NIGHT: FUEL THE FIRE

*Read aloud:* As we light this candle on the 7th night of Chanukah, we remember Dante Parker. May Dante's memory be for a blessing.

*Recite Chanukah blessings on page 3.*

*Read aloud:* With this dedication we are moved by our Jewish values that teach us, "Justice! Justice you shall pursue!" and tonight we take action to carry out the fifth of six demands called for by Ferguson Action organizers:



## **FERGUSON ACTION'S DEMAND #5: SUPPORT THE PASSAGE OF THE END RACIAL PROFILING ACT**

### **Options for taking action:**

**Option 1:** *Share the following message on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.):*

"I support Ferguson Action's call for the passage of the End Racial Profiling Act.  
[www.fergusonaction.com/demands](http://www.fergusonaction.com/demands)"

**Option 2:** Contact your U.S. representative and senators, and urge them to support the End Racial Profiling Act. You can find further information and an online tool for contacting your elected representatives about this issue at: <http://bit.ly/1uHiMYN>.

# EIGHTH NIGHT: REDEDICATION

*Read aloud:* As we light this candle on the 8th night of Chanukah, we remember Eric Garner. May Eric's memory be for a blessing.

Recite Chanukah blessings on page 3.

*Read aloud:* With this dedication we are moved by our Jewish values that teach us, "Justice! Justice you shall pursue!" and tonight we take action to carry out the sixth of six demands called for by Ferguson Action organizers:

## **FERGUSON ACTION'S DEMAND #6: THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION DEVELOPS, LEGISLATES AND ENACTS A NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE.**

### **Options for taking action:**

**Option 1:** *Share the following message on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.):*

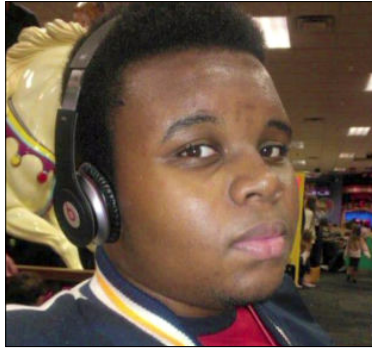
"I support Ferguson Action's call for the Obama Administration to develop, legislate and enact a National Plan of Action for Racial Justice. [www.fergusonaction.org/demands](http://www.fergusonaction.org/demands)"

**Option 2:** Police violence against communities of color, combined with the daily violence of systemic racism, has been pervasive in our society for generations and will not stop without sustained, long term action. For Jews of color and white Jews—for people of color and white people—it is in our mutual interest to break the bonds of racism and oppression.

As Chanukah draws to a close, let us rededicate ourselves to working for racial justice in the coming months and years by making a specific commitment. Spend some time looking into organizations in your community working on issues of racial justice, such as police accountability, racial profiling, and the prison industrial complex, to name a few. What organizations, particularly those led by people of color, are doing this work? What issues are they addressing? How can you support their work? What work can be done in your Jewish community to invite frank conversations—and plans for action—about racism in the Jewish community? Write down two or three ways you commit to take action in the coming months and beyond.

# 8 NIGHTS, 8 LIVES

Every 28 hours a Black person is killed by police, security guards and self-appointed vigilantes. Though we chose to remember these particular eight people during the eight nights of Chanukah, we remember that there are many, many more Black people killed by police whose names we have not mentioned. You can find more stories at: <http://tinyurl.com/lejs2m>.



**Michael Brown's life was taken on August 9, 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri.**  
**Michael was 18 years old.**



**Yvette Smith's life was taken on February 16, 2014 in Bastrop, Texas.**  
**Yvette was 47 years old and a mother of two.**



**Aiyana Mo'Nay Stanley Jones's life was taken on May 16, 2010 in Detroit, Michigan.**  
**Aiyana was 7 years old.**



**Tarika Wilson's life was taken on January 4, 2008 in Lima, Ohio.**  
**Tarika was 26 years old and a mother of six.**



**Rekia Boyd's life was taken on March 22, 2012 in Chicago, Illinois.  
Rekia was 22 years old.**



**Tamir Rice's life was taken on November 22, 2014 in Cleveland, Ohio.  
Tamir was 12 years old.**



**Dante Parker's life was taken on August 12, 2014 in San Bernardino County, California.  
Dante was 36 years old and a father of 5.**



**Eric Garner's life was taken on July 17, 2014 in Staten Island, New York.  
Eric was 43 years old, a father of six, and a grandfather of two.**

# OUR VISION FOR A NEW AMERICA

by Ferguson Action, [fergusonaction.com](http://fergusonaction.com)

## **WE WANT JUSTICE FOR MICHAEL BROWN. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR OUR COMMUNITIES.**

### **We Want an End to all Forms of Discrimination and the Full Recognition of our Human Rights.**

The United States Government must acknowledge and address the structural violence and institutional discrimination that continues to imprison our communities either in a life of poverty and/or one behind bars. We want the United States Government to recognize the full spectrum of our human rights and its obligations under international law.

### **We Want An Immediate End To Police Brutality And the Murder Of Black, Brown and All Oppressed People.**

Every 28 hours a black person in the United States is killed by someone employed or protected by the government of the United States. Other communities are also criminalized, targeted, attacked and brutalized. We want an immediate end to state sanctioned violence against our communities.

### **We Want Full Employment For Our People.**

Every individual has the human right to employment and a living wage. Inability to access employment and fair pay continues to marginalize our communities, ready us for imprisonment, and deny us of our right to a life with dignity.

### **We Want Decent Housing Fit For The Shelter Of Human Beings.**

Our communities have a human right to access quality housing that protects our families and allows for our children to be free from harm.

### **We Want an End to the School to Prison Pipeline and Quality Education for All.**

We want an end to policies that criminalize our young people as well as discriminatory discipline practices that bar access to quality education. Furthermore, we want all children to be able to access free, quality education. Including free or affordable public university.

### **We Want Freedom from Mass Incarceration and an End to the Prison Industrial Complex.**

We want an end to the over policing and surveillance of our communities. This will hasten an end to the criminalization of black and brown people and hyper incarceration everywhere. Policing in the United States has historically helped to enforce racist laws, policies and norms. The result is a massive prison industrial complex built on the warehousing of black people. We call for the cessation of mass incarceration and the eradication of the prison industrial complex all together. In its place we will address harm and conflict in our communities through community based, restorative solutions.

# NATIONAL DEMANDS

by Ferguson Action, [fergusonaction.com](http://fergusonaction.com)

## **1. The De-militarization of Local Law Enforcement across the country.**

Strict limits on the transfer and use of military equipment to local law enforcement and the adoption of the Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act of 2014. The federal government should discontinue the supply of military weaponry and equipment to local law enforcement and immediately demilitarize local law enforcement, including eliminating the use of military technology and equipment.

## **2. A Comprehensive Review of systemic abuses by local police departments, including the publication of data relating to racially biased policing, and the development of best practices.**

A comprehensive review by the Department of Justice into systematic abuses by police departments and the development of specific use of force standards and accompanying recommendations for police training, community involvement and oversight strategies and standards for independent investigatory/disciplinary mechanisms when excessive force is used. These standards must include a Department of Justice review trigger when continued excessive use of force occurs.

A comprehensive federal review of police departments' data collection practices and the development of a new comprehensive data collection system that allows for annual reporting of data on the rates of stops, frisks, searches, summonses and arrests by race, age, and gender. These standards must also include a DOJ review trigger when departments continue discriminatory policing practices.

## **3. Repurposing of law enforcement funds to support community based alternatives to incarceration and the conditioning of DOJ funding on the ending of discriminatory policing and the adoption of DOJ best practices.**

The repurposing of Department of Justice funds to create grants that support and implement community oversight mechanisms and community based alternatives to law enforcement and incarceration—including community boards/commissions, restorative justice practices, amnesty programs to clear open warrants, and know-your-rights-education conducted by community members.

The development of a DOJ policy to withhold funds from local police departments who engage in discriminatory policing practices and condition federal grant funds on the adoption of recommended DOJ trainings, community involvement and oversight strategies, use of force standards and standards for independent investigatory/disciplinary mechanisms.

**4. A Congressional Hearing investigating the criminalization of communities of color, racial profiling, police abuses and torture by law enforcement.**

Congressional hearings investigating the criminalization of communities of color and systemic law enforcement discriminatory profiling and other abuses especially at the local level—including an examination of systemic structures and institutional practices and the elevation of the experiences and voices of those most impacted. Congressional hearings will allow for a continuation of the national discussion about police abuse and its underlying causes.

**5. Support the Passage of the End Racial Profiling Act.** Support for the passage of the End Racial Profiling Act (ERPA) which in law would prohibit the use of profiling on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin or religion by law enforcement agencies.

**6. The Obama Administration develops, legislates and enacts a National Plan of Action for Racial Justice.** The development and enactment of a National Plan of Action for Racial Justice by the Obama Administration. The National Plan of Action for Racial Justice should be a comprehensive plan that address persistent and ongoing forms of racial discrimination and disparities that exist in nearly every sphere of life including: criminal justice, employment, housing, education, health, land/property, voting, poverty and immigration. The Plan would set concrete targets for achieving racial equality and reducing racial disparities and create new tools for holding government accountable to meeting targets.