

Introduction to the Counting the Omer Against Racism

While Passover celebrates the initial liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, Shavuot marks the culmination of the process of liberation, when the Jews became an autonomous community with their own laws and standards. Counting up to Shavuot reminds us of this process of moving from a slave mentality to a more liberated one.

This year, the CBH Anti-Racism Project has created a way for each of us, at home, to mark these days with reflections on race and freedom, creating a unique Counting the Omer Against Racism experience. Each week is structured as follows:

1. Sunday - Quote
2. Monday - Untold history tidbit
3. Tuesday - Meditation
4. Wednesday - Acknowledgement of privilege from “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”
5. Thursday - Call to notice
6. Friday - Poem
7. Saturday - Reflection and Join us for Havdallah (by zoom)

On Saturdays from 5:30-6:00 pm, those who wish are invited to join together for a virtual (zoom) Havdallah program. After a beautiful havdallah ceremony, we will share some of our learnings and insights from the past week and get an introduction to the theme for the upcoming week. (continued on next page)

If you haven't yet read the article “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” by Peggy McIntosh, we highly recommend it as a first step so that there is a context for your learning. Its basic premise is that as White People we aren't even aware of many of our privileges and that noticing them is an important first step. The article can be found at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Wq6hvVGM9yXcMJTjaNmL_P8kMLxxgUvM/view?usp=sharing

One last suggestion before we embark –

“Reminder – Antiracism is not a self-improvement project. When you make it about you, constructive criticism feels like a very personal attack. When BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) are at the center of your antiracism work, constructive criticism feels like a welcome opportunity to learn and do better.”

- Marie Beech @bariejbeech

This quote, for me, is essential. If you can stay curious about why your immediate assumption was X, and not get defensive, you can think of it as an interesting puzzle to unravel. Then, this work can be much more meaningful, and you'll start to be able to see racism and privilege in all sorts of places that you never noticed before. If, however, you take these discoveries as criticisms about yourself, you are likely to become defensive and unreceptive to the possibility of seeing things differently.

- Katia Segrè Cohen



How To Bless The Omer Count



One stands when counting the Omer, and begins by reciting the following blessing:




בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר:



Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha'Olam asher kid'shanu
b'mitzvotav v'tizivanu al sefirat ha Omer.



Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe,
who has sanctified us with your commandments and
commanded us to count the Omer.




<p>Sun 3/28</p>	<p>1</p>		<p>Week 1 – White Privilege</p> <p>White Privilege: Quotation</p> <p>“I sometimes visualize the ongoing cycle of racism as a moving walkway at the airport. Active racist behavior is equivalent to walking fast on the conveyor belt. The person engaged in active racist behavior has identified with the ideology of White supremacy and is moving with it. Passive racist behavior is equivalent to standing still on the walkway. No overt effort is being made, but the conveyor belt moves the bystanders along to the same destination as those who are actively walking. Some of the bystanders may feel the motion of the conveyor belt, see the active racists ahead of them, and choose to turn around, unwilling to go in the same destination as the White supremacists. But unless they are walking actively in the opposite direction at a speed faster than the conveyor belt—unless they are actively antiracist—they will find themselves carried along with the others.”</p> <p>- Tatum, Beverly Daniel. “Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? and Other Conversations About Race.”</p>
<p>Mon 3/29</p>	<p>2</p>		<p>White Privilege: Untold history tidbit</p> <p>Before Rosa Parks. . . At just 15 years old, Claudette Colvin understood that she did not have white privilege and she boldly challenged the Jim Crow laws that told her where she could sit on the bus. Colvin refused to give up her seat and move to the back of the bus in Montgomery Alabama. She was arrested and jailed, but she later joined with three other women who brought a lawsuit (Browder v. Gayle) to successfully challenge and overturn the bus segregation laws in Montgomery and in Alabama. https://www.npr.org/2009/03/15/101719889/before-rosa-parks-there-was-claudette-colvin</p>



<p>Tues 3/30</p>	<p>3</p>		<p>White Privilege: Meditation</p> <p>Read each statement. Take a couple of minutes to acknowledge each of these privileges and think of what it means for people who don't have that privilege:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race. • I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group. • I can think over many options, social, political, imaginative or professional, without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do. • I can arrange my activities so that I will never have to experience feelings of rejection owing to my race.
<p>Wed 3/31</p>	<p>4</p>		<p>White Privilege: Acknowledgement of privilege</p> <p>“I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life...I repeatedly forgot each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me, white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own.”</p> <p>- Peggy McIntosh</p>


<p>Thurs 4/1</p>	<p>5</p>		<p>White Privilege: Call to notice</p> <p>A midrash tells us that the burning bush was always there in the wilderness, but only Moses turned aside to look. Noticing injustice is the first step to action.</p> <p>What did you notice during the past week about privilege you have from being white?</p>
<p>Fri 4/2</p>	<p>6</p>		<p>White Privilege: Poem</p> <p><u>from Citizen (2011)</u></p> <p>In the line at the drugstore, it's finally your turn, and then it's not as he walks in front of you. And puts his things on the counter. The cashier says, Sir, she was next. When he turns to you he is truly surprised. Oh my God, I didn't even see you. You must be in a hurry, you offer. No, no, no, I really didn't see you. - Claudine Rankine</p>
<p>Sat 4/3</p>	<p>7</p>		<p>White Privilege: Reflection</p> <p>Shabbat is a time for some quiet self-reflection.</p> <p>Spend a few moments thinking or writing about one thing from this week's Omer offerings that had an impact on you and why.</p> <p>Please join us for Havdalah tonight at 5:30 pm on zoom and share your reflections. https://bethhatikvah-org.zoom.us/j/95133300357?pwd=RmFVZjFIU2k2TnJTZnJUanZGSkFCQT09</p>


			Meeting ID: 951 3330 0357 Passcode: 105251.
			Week 2 – Education
Sun 4/4	8		<p>Discrimination in Education: Quotation</p> <p>“If, for example, one managed to change the curriculum in all the schools so that Negroes learned more about themselves and their real contributions to this culture, you would be liberating not only Negroes, you’d be liberating white people who know nothing about their own history.”</p> <p>- <i>James Baldwin, A Talk to Teachers, 1963</i></p>
Mon 4/5	9		<p>Discrimination in Education: Untold history tidbit</p> <p>Move over Amelia Earhart. . . . While Amelia Earhart became famous as a pioneering rare female aviator in the early 20th century, the first African American aviator, Bessie Coleman, flew beneath history’s radar. Coleman, born 5 years before Amelia in 1892, obtained her flying license in 1921 -- the same year that Amelia had her first flying lesson. When Coleman decided to become a pilot, she was stonewalled in the U.S. due to her race and gender, so a black newspaper publisher paid for her to go to France for pilot training. When she returned with her license, she obtained some notoriety on the air show circuit, and the nickname “Queen Bess,” for her dare-devil acts. She died in a plane crash in 1926 before accomplishing her dream of starting a flight school to train African American female pilots.</p> <p>https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tKq9SpnezZsO4gSNk3ErLEcmAIGHBEStd4gmsOLPcqA/edit#</p>

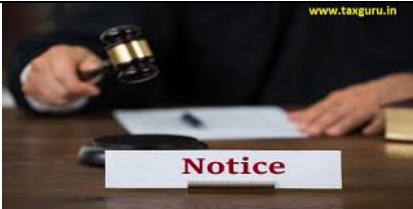


<p>Tues 4/6</p>	<p>10</p>		<p>Discrimination in Education: Meditation</p> <p>Read each statement. Take a couple of minutes to reflect on what it means for you and for people who don't have that privilege, specifically, People of Color:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I and/or my children have the privilege of attending segregated schools of affluence. • I have/had the privilege of learning about my race in school. • I and/or my children have the privilege of finding children's books that overwhelmingly represent my race.
<p>Wed 4/7</p>	<p>11</p>		<p>Discrimination in Education: Acknowledgement of privilege</p> <p>“When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.”</p> <p>“I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.”</p> <p>“I can be pretty sure that my children's teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others' attitudes toward their race.”</p> <p>“I can easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race.”</p> <p>“I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.”</p> <p>- Peggy McIntosh</p>



<p>Thurs 4/8</p>	<p>12</p>		<p>Discrimination in Education: Call to notice</p> <p>A midrash tells us that the burning bush was always there in the wilderness, but only Moses turned aside to look. Noticing injustice is the first step to action.</p> <p>What did you notice today or this past week about racism?</p> <p><i>Today is Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)</i> How can we use the memory of being persecuted and dehumanized in the holocaust to help us recognize the humanity of each Black person as they face violence and discrimination in America today?</p>
<p>Fri 4/9</p>	<p>13</p>		<p>Discrimination in Education: Poem</p> <p><u>from “And Still I Rise” (1978)</u> You may write me down in history With your twisted, bitter lies. You may trod me in the very dirt But still, like dust, I’ll rise. - Maya Angelou</p>
<p>Sat 4/10</p>	<p>14</p>		<p>Discrimination in Education: Reflection</p> <p>Shabbat is a time for some quiet self-reflection.</p> <p>Spend a few moments thinking or writing about one thing from this week’s Omer offerings that had an impact on you and why.</p> <p>Please join us for Havdalah tonight at 5:30 pm on zoom and share your reflections. https://bethhatikvah-org.zoom.us/j/95133300357?pwd=RmFVZjFlU2k2TnJTZnJUanZGSkFCQT09</p>






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			Week 3 – Policing and Prisons
Sun 4/11	15		<p>Racial Disparities in Policing and Criminal Justice: Quotation</p> <p>“The true measure of character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned.”</p> <p>“Our criminal justice system treats you better if you are rich and guilty than if you are poor and innocent.”</p> <p>– Bryan Stevenson</p> <p><i>To receive a daily email from Equal Justice Initiative’s A History of Racial Injustice project sign up at https://calendar.eji.org/sign-up</i></p>
Mon 4/12	16		Racial Disparities in Policing and Criminal Justice: Untold history tidbit


			<p>In 2013, the hashtag Black Lives Matter was created by Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi, who are credited with forming the Black Lives Matter Network, a loosely coordinated, now global network of groups advocating for racial justice and against police brutality. Cullors, an artist, author, organizer, educator, speaker, and 2021 Nobel Peace Prize nominee, has been working for civil and criminal justice and against police brutality for 20 years, including work in Los Angeles that led to the creation of the Civilian Oversight Commission for the LA Police Dept. Garza (who identifies as Jewish having grown up with a Jewish step-father) also organized the Freedom Ride To Ferguson, Missouri, after the police killing of Michael Brown in that city. The Freedom Ride To Ferguson borrowed the name from the civil rights activist Freedom Riders of the 1960's who suffered police brutality for riding on segregated interstate buses to fight segregation in transportation. Tometi, the daughter of Nigerian immigrants, has not only fought against police brutality but also served as Executive Director for the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, an organization that helps mobilize black immigrant communities in the fight for social and economic justice.</p>
Tues 4/13	17		<p>Racial Disparities in Policing and Criminal Justice: Meditation</p> <p>As a way of setting an intention to keep George Floyd (and the other innocent People of Color the police killed) in our awareness, focus on your breath for 8 minutes 46 seconds. This is the amount of time that a police officer had his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck – suffocating his breath from him. Notice your breath, the movement of your chest as a step toward increasing awareness, and as a reminder of racial injustice that has not yet been eliminated. You may find that 8 minutes and 46 seconds can be a long period of time.</p> <p><i>Today is Yom HaZikaron (the Day of Remembering or Memorial Day in Israel)</i></p>



			<p>Memorial Day in Israel is a day for remembering those who were killed in wars and terror attacks...On this day, consider learning about one or more of the many black and brown men and women who were killed by the police in 2020.</p> <p>According to The Washington Post’s database that tracks police shooting – 988 people have been shot and killed by police in the past year (this number has been static at about 1,000 people/year for the 5 years that they have collected data). The rate at which black Americans are killed by police is 2.5 times higher than the rate for white Americans. To learn more and search the database go to: https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/</p>
Wed 4/14	18		<p>Racial Disparities in Policing and Criminal Justice: Acknowledgement of privilege</p> <p>“If a traffic cop pulls me over, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.”</p> <p>“I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.”</p> <p>“I will feel welcomed and "normal" in the usual walks of public life, institutional and social.”</p> <p>“I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.”</p> <p>- Peggy McIntosh</p> <p><i>Today is Yom HaAtzmaut (Independence Day in Israel)</i> For many Jews, the existence of Israel helps us feel safer, knowing that if antisemitism gets bad, we have a place to go. Imagine how you would feel as a Black American with no escape option.</p>


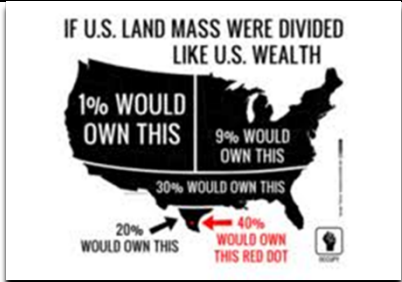
<p>Thurs 4/15</p>	<p>19</p>		<p>Racial Disparities in Policing and Criminal Justice: Call to notice</p> <p>A midrash tells us that the burning bush was always there in the wilderness, but only Moses turned aside to look. Noticing injustice is the first step to action.</p> <p>What have you seen, read or heard or noticed this past week about racism in policing and criminal justice?</p>
<p>Fri 4/16</p>	<p>20</p>		<p>Racial Disparities in Policing and Criminal Justice: Poem</p> <p><u>from “Nightstick (A Mural for Michael Brown)” 2018</u></p> <p>...A finger is a gun, A wallet is a gun, Skin a shiny pistol, a demon, A barrel already ready.</p> <p>HANDS UP DON’T SHOOT –</p> <p>Arms not to bear but bare. Don’t dare take a left into The wrong skin... - Kevin Young</p>
<p>Sat 4/17</p>	<p>21</p>		<p>Racial Disparities in Policing and Criminal Justice: Reflection</p> <p>Shabbat is a time for some quiet self-reflection.</p> <p>Spend a few moments thinking or writing about one thing from this week’s Omer offerings that had an impact on you and why.</p> <p>Please join us for Havdalah tonight at 5:30 pm on zoom and share your reflections.</p>




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			Week 4 – Housing
Sun 4/18	22		Housing Inequality: Quotation “‘If you sought to advantage one group of Americans and disadvantage another, you could scarcely choose a more graceful method than housing discrimination. Housing determines access to transportation, green spaces, decent schools, decent food, decent jobs, and decent services. Housing affects your chances of being robbed and shot as well as your chances of being stopped and frisked. And housing discrimination is as quiet as it is deadly. It can be pursued through violence and terrorism, but it doesn't need it’”. - Ta Nehisi Coates, The Atlantic, 2014
Mon 4/19	23		Housing Inequality: Untold history tidbit Edward Brooke, the first African American popularly elected U.S. Senator* focused much of his energy on combatting housing discrimination and supporting affordable housing. Brooke served on the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, which investigated the cause of rioting in many major cities in the late 1960s. The Commission's final report, known as the Kerner Report, called out white racist policies as the cause for housing segregation and the rise of the ghetto environments that contributed to the race riots: "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white--separate and unequal.


			<p>What white Americans have never fully understood — but what the Negro can never forget — is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it."</p> <p>- Kerner Report</p> <p>The Kerner Report recommended the creation and funding of government programs to provide needed services, to hire more diverse and sensitive police forces and, most notably, to invest billions in housing programs aimed at breaking up residential segregation.</p> <p>Within months after the Kerner Report was issued, Congress passed the 1968 Fair Housing Act, which prohibited discrimination concerning the sale, rental and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin and sex. Senator Brooke co-authored the Act, and during Senate debate, he shared his personal story of returning from WWII military service and being prevented from buying a home where he wanted because of discrimination and policies that furthered racial segregation.</p> <p>*Previous African American Senators were appointed by State legislators before senators began to be elected by popular vote.</p> <p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Brooke https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerner_Commission https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/fair-housing-act</p>
Tues 4/20	24	<p style="text-align: center;">5 Senses</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">      </div> <p style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; font-size: small;"> Sight Hearing Touch Smell Taste </p>	<p>Housing Inequality: Meditation</p> <p>5 Senses Meditation requires you to engage all five of your senses while you connect your mind, body and spirit with your surroundings.</p>



			<p>Here are the steps to complete this exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, notice 5 things that you can see. Look around you and become aware of your environment. Try to pick out something that you don't usually notice. • Second, notice 4 things you can feel. Bring attention to the things that you're currently feeling, such as the texture of your clothing or the smooth surface of the table you're resting your hands on. • Third, notice 3 things that you can hear. Listen for and notice things in the background that you don't normally notice. It could be the birds chirping outside or an appliance humming in the next room. • Fourth, notice 2 things you can smell. Bring attention to scents that you usually filter out, either pleasant or unpleasant. Catch a whiff of the pine trees outside or food cooking in the kitchen. • Finally, notice 1 thing you can taste. Take a sip of a drink, chew gum, or notice the current taste in your mouth. • Take moment to reflect on how comfortable you felt in your environment. Would you have the same appreciation if you couldn't live in your area of choice or where your safety was an issue?
Wed 4/21	25		<p>Housing Inequality: Acknowledgement of privilege</p> <p>“I have no difficulty finding neighborhoods where people approve of our household. And can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.”</p> <p>“If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.”</p> <p>“I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.”</p>

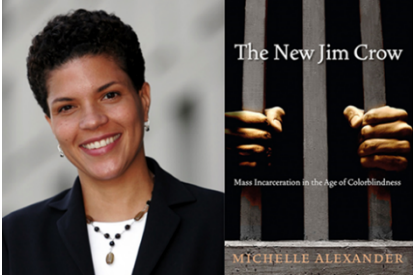
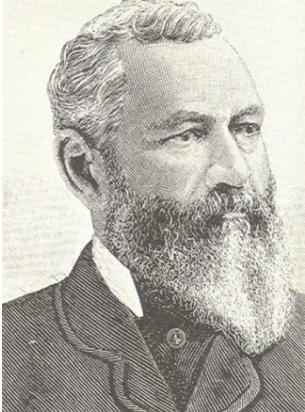
			<p>“I can travel alone or with my spouse without expecting embarrassment or hostility in those who deal with us.”</p> <p>- Peggy McIntosh</p>
Thurs 4/22	26		<p>Housing Inequality: Call to notice</p> <p>A midrash tells us that the burning bush was always there in the wilderness, but only Moses turned aside to look. Noticing injustice is the first step to action.</p> <p>What have you noticed this week about where you live?</p>
Fri 4/23	27		<p>Housing Inequality: Poem</p> <p>Restrictive Covenants (1949)</p> <p>When I move Into a neighborhood Folks fly.</p> <p>Even every foreigner That can move, moves. Why?</p> <p>The moon doesn't run Neither does the sun.</p> <p>In Chicago They've got covenants Restricting me— Hemmed in On the South Side, Can't breathe free.</p>



			<p>But the wind blows there. I reckon the wind Must care. - Langston Hughes</p>
Sat 4/24	28		<p>Housing Inequality: Reflection</p> <p>Shabbat is a time for some quiet self-reflection.</p> <p>Spend a few moments thinking or writing about one thing from this week’s Omer offerings that had an impact on you and why.</p> <p>Please join us for Havdalah tonight at 5:30 on zoom and share your reflections. https://bethhatikvah-org.zoom.us/j/95133300357?pwd=RmFVZjFIU2k2TnJTZnJUanZGSkFCOT09 Meeting ID: 951 3330 0357 Passcode: 105251.</p>
			<p>Week 5 – Wages/Income</p>
Sun 4/25	29		<p>Income/Wealth Inequality: Quotation</p> <p>“If average black family wealth continues to grow at the same pace of the past three decades, black families will have to labor 228 years to amass the same amount of wealth white families already have today. Those 228 years amount to a span of time just 17 years shorter than slavery’s 245-year American lifespan.”</p> <p>- Josh Hoxie, Inequality.org, 2017</p>




<p>Mon 4/26</p>	<p>30</p>		<p>Income/Wealth Inequality: Untold history tidbit</p> <p>Black Wall Street. In the early 1900s, a segregated area in Tulsa Oklahoma called Greenwood and known as “Black Wall Street” became home to over 10,000 wealthy, successful African Americans. Due to segregation, Greenwood became fully self-contained and self-reliant, with its own businesses, including banks, restaurants, cafes, jewelers, hotels, clothiers, theatres, a newspaper, and even its own superior school district and library. In 1921, however, fueled by the jealousy of less successful white Tulsans, and in response to an allegation that a 19 year-old black man had raped a 17 year-old white girl, angry mobs of armed white men descended on Greenwood, looting the stores, shooting the residents, and ultimately burning down 35 square blocks of homes and businesses. Thousands were left homeless, 300 black residents were murdered and 800 more injured, and while blacks trying to defend themselves and their property were rounded up and detained, no whites were arrested. https://www.history.com/news/black-wall-street-tulsa-race-massacre</p>
<p>Tues 4/27</p>	<p>31</p>		<p>Income/Wealth Inequality: Meditation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take 30 seconds to list 5 of the major stressors in your life. • Rank them in order of pain. • Imagine if you only made minimum wage, \$7.50 an hour (federal minimum wage). How would your stressors change? What are the consequences of the heightened financial stress? How does white privilege affect financial stress?
<p>Wed 4/28</p>	<p>32</p>		<p>Income/Wealth Inequality: Acknowledgement of privilege</p> <p>“Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.”</p> <p>“I can be pretty sure that an argument with a colleague of another race is more likely to jeopardize her/his chances for advancement than to jeopardize mine.”</p>



			<p>“I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to “the person in charge,” I will be facing a person of my race.”</p> <p>“I can be pretty sure that if I argue for the promotion of a person of another race, or a program centering on race, this is not likely to cost me heavily within my present setting, even if my colleagues disagree with me.”</p> <p>“I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having my co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of my race.”</p> <p>“I can be pretty sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with me and advise me about my next steps, professionally.”</p> <p>- Peggy McIntosh</p>
Thurs 4/29	33		<p>Income/Wealth Inequality: Call to notice</p> <p>A midrash tells us that the burning bush was always there in the wilderness, but only Moses turned aside to look. Noticing injustice is the first step to action.</p> <p>What have you noticed this week about who has wealth in our society?</p> <p><i>Today is Lag b’Omer</i> (literally the 33rd day of counting the Omer), there are no specific rituals for this day, but many customs have come about over the years including making bonfires that celebrate Jewish resistance to oppression. Use this energy to create a bonfire to burn away the injustice of racism.</p>


<p>Fri 4/30</p>	<p>34</p>		<p>Income/Wealth Inequality: Poem</p> <p>litany</p> <p>today i am a black woman in america & i am singing a melody ridden lullaby it sounds like:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the gentrification of a brooklyn stoop the rent raised three times my wages the bodega and laundromat burned down on the corner the people on the corner each lock & key their chromosomes a note of ash & inquiry on their tongues</p> <p>today i am a black woman in a hopeless state i will apply for financial aid and food stamps with the same mouth i spit poems from i will ask the angels of a creative god to lessen the blows & i will beg for forgiveness when i curse the rising sun</p> <p>Mahogany L. Browne</p>
<p>Sat 5/1</p>	<p>35</p>		<p>Income/Wealth Inequality: Reflection</p> <p>Shabbat is a time for some quiet self-reflection.</p> <p>Spend a few moments thinking or writing about one thing from this week's Omer offerings that had an impact on you and why.</p> <p>Please join us for Havdalah tonight at 5:30 pm on zoom and share your reflections.</p>




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			Week 6 – Voting Voting Rights: Quotation
Sun 5/2	36		<p>“The arguments and rationalizations that have been trotted out in support of racial exclusion and discrimination in its various forms have changed and evolved, but the outcome has remained largely the same. An extraordinary percentage of black men in the United States are legally barred from voting today, just as they have been throughout most of American history.”</p> <p>- Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow.</p>
Mon 5/3	37		Voting Rights: Untold history tidbit After the Civil War and before the rise of Jim Crow laws and voter suppression, blacks were elected to many state and federal political positions. For example, in 1872, P.B.S. Pinchback became the Governor of Louisiana, making him the first African American governor of any U.S. state. Pinchback’s mother was a former slave of Pinchback’s father, a plantation owner in Georgia. Prior to serving as Governor, Pinchback served as a member of the Louisiana State Senate and as Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana. After serving as Governor, Pinchback was elected to the U.S. Congress, but he was prevented from actually being seated. https://www.nga.org/governor/pinckney-benton-stewart-pinchback/

<p>Tues 5/4</p>	<p>38</p>		<p>Voting Rights: Meditation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagine it's election day. Your polling place is a few minutes from your house. You drive there before work and are welcomed by poll workers. All you have to do is sign a book and then go into the voting booth. You get your sticker. • How did you feel about your experience? How would you rate the ease of voting? • Now imagine it's election day. The polling place is 10 miles from your home. You don't own a car and have to take public transportation. You have to work today and it will take an hour to get there. You get to the polling place. There is a long line. You have to show a government issued id. Finally, you get to cast your vote. • How do you feel about your experience? How would you rate the ease of voting?
<p>Wed 5/5</p>	<p>39</p>		<p>Voting Rights: Acknowledgement of privilege</p> <p>“I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.”</p> <p>“My culture gives me little fear about ignoring the perspectives and powers of people of other races.”</p> <p>- Peggy McIntosh</p> <p><i>Today is Cinco de Mayo</i> – before you decide to have tacos and margaritas spend a minute and google the history of this important battle for freedom.</p>

<p>Thurs 5/6</p>	<p>40</p>		<p>Voting Rights: Call to notice</p> <p>A midrash tells us that the burning bush was always there in the wilderness, but only Moses turned aside to look. Noticing injustice is the first step to action.</p> <p>What have you read or heard in the news this week about voting rights?</p>
<p>Fri 5/7</p>	<p>41</p>		<p>Voting Rights: Poem</p> <p><u>From “We Climb the Hill” (2021)</u> We’ve braved the belly of the beast. We’ve learned that quiet isn’t always peace. In the norms and notions of what just is Isn’t always justice ... The new day blooms as we free it For there is always light. If only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we’re brave enough to be it. - Amanda Gorman</p>
<p>Sat 5/8</p>	<p>42</p>		<p>Voting Rights: Reflection</p> <p>Shabbat is a time for some quiet self-reflection.</p> <p>Spend a few moments thinking or writing about one thing from this week’s Omer offerings that had an impact on you and why.</p> <p>Please join us for Havdalah tonight at 5:30 on zoom and share your reflections. https://bethhatikvah-org.zoom.us/j/95133300357?pwd=RmFVZjFIU2k2TnJTZnJUanZGSkFCQT09 Meeting ID: 951 3330 0357 Passcode: 105251.</p>

			Week 7 – How to be more Anti-Racist / Next Steps
Sun 5/9	43		<p>How to be more Anti-racist / Next steps: Quotation</p> <p>“I tell my students, “When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else.”</p> <p>- Toni Morrison</p>
Mon 5/10	44		<p>How to be more Anti-racist / Next steps: Untold history tidbit</p> <p>When you use your Nest, ride an elevator, get your Covid vaccine or turn on the lights. . . think about the contributions of African American inventors:</p> <p>An African American nurse/inventor, Mary Van Brittan Brown, devised a security unit to feel safer in her Queens, New York, home when her husband was away. In 1966, she invented a security system that used a camera that could slide into and look through four peepholes in her front door, with the captured images then appearing on a monitor in her home so she could preview who was at the door. She added other features, including a microphone, a button to unlock the door, and a button to contact the police. In 1969, she and her husband were awarded a patent for the system, various elements of which are commonly used in today’s modern security systems.</p> <p>In 1887, after his daughter fatally fell down an elevator shaft, African American inventor Alexander Miles invented and patented the mechanism that automatically opens and closes elevator shaft doors. His practical and life-saving design is largely reflected in elevators used today.</p> <p>Inoculation was introduced to America by an African slave named Onesimus, who was the slave of a Puritan Minister in Massachusetts named Cotton Mather.</p>

			<p>Onesimus introduced Mather to the African practice of inoculation or extracting the material from an infected person and scratching it into the skin of an uninfected person. Through Mather's efforts, the technique was used to inoculate 240 people during a smallpox epidemic in Boston in 1721, and it was later used to inoculate American soldiers during the Revolutionary war.</p> <p>African American inventor Lewis Latimer improved upon Edison's original 1879 version of the light bulb, which used a platinum filament and lasted for only a few days. In 1881, Latimer, who had been born to former slaves, developed the carbon filament, which increased the life span and practicality of light bulbs so much that in 1884, Latimer was hired to work with Edison at the Edison Electric Light Company.</p> <p>http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/explore/10-black-history-little-known-facts/</p> <p>https://www.history.com/news/8-black-inventors-african-american</p>
Tues 5/11	45		<p>How to be more Anti-racist / Next steps: Meditation</p> <p>Listen to the LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION which cultivates our propensity for kindness. It involves mentally sending goodwill, kindness, and warmth towards others by silently repeating a series of mantras. Found at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wNg9-0oCHlpqsLnrelaDg2HyZds33xKU/view?usp=sharing</p>

Wed 5/12	46		<p>How to be more Anti-racist / Next steps: Acknowledgement of privilege</p> <p>“I began to ask each time: “What’s the worst that could happen to me if I tell the truth?” Unlike women in other countries, our breaking silence is unlikely to have us jailed, “disappeared” or run off the road at night. Our speaking out will irritate some people, get us called bitchy or hypersensitive, and disrupt some dinner parties. And then our speaking out will permit other women to speak, until laws are changed and lives are saved and the world is altered forever.”</p> <p>- Audre Lorde</p>
Thurs 5/13	47		<p>How to be more Anti-racist / Next steps: Call to notice</p> <p>A midrash tells us that the burning bush was always there in the wilderness, but only Moses turned aside to look. Noticing injustice is the first step to action.</p> <p>What have you learned or noticed during the Omer that will inspire you to be anti-racist?</p>
Fri 5/14	48		<p>How to be more Anti-racist / Next steps: Poem</p> <p>“<u>How Many Miles Must We March</u>” 1994 (from Welcome to the Cruel World Album)</p> <p>Exactly how much will have to burn before we will look to the past to learn? We walk along the endless path which has led us in circles so here we are right back. ... We can’t let the future become our past if we are to change the world. Won’t you please tell me, tell me please, how many miles must we march?</p> <p>- Ben Harper</p>

Sat
5/15

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How to be more Anti-racist / Next steps: Reflection

Today is the last day of the Omer, tomorrow is Shavuot when we commemorate receiving the Torah. The Torah commands us Tzedek, tzedek tirdof (Justice, justice shall you pursue).

On this Shabbat spend some time thinking/writing about what you have learned/felt/understood over the past seven weeks. What is one step you will commit to take toward pursuing justice?

Please join us for Havdalah tonight at 5:30 pm on zoom and share your reflections.
<https://bethhatikvah-org.zoom.us/j/95133300357?pwd=RmFVZjFlU2k2TnJTZnJUanZGSkFCQT09>
Meeting ID: 951 3330 0357 Passcode: 105251.

“The first task of whites in these struggles is to be vocal and visible.”
- Anne Braden