



Dear friends,

Almost 2000 years ago in a Talmudic discussion about the importance of witnesses when prosecuting capital crimes, the Rabbis taught that in the book of Genesis, “Humans were created on their own to teach you that whoever destroys one soul is regarded by the Torah as if he had destroyed a whole world and whoever saves one soul, is regarded as if he had saved a whole world.” [Sanhedrin 36a]

Today, we stand witness to the destruction of another world as we add George Floyd’s death to the tragically long list of the many black and brown people who lose their lives in a never-end cycle of racially biased encounters.

At Temple Beth-El, we affirm our gratitude to the San Antonio Police Department and the Bexar County Sheriff’s Office. We treasure members of our own congregation who dedicate their lives to law enforcement, as well as the individual men and women who keep our building and community secure on a daily basis.

This, however, does not absolve us from speaking out and educating ourselves about the ever-present sense of inequity, danger and loss that communities of color experience here in San Antonio and throughout the United States.

Temple Beth-El has a proud legacy of standing up and speaking out when it comes to racial and economic injustice. We continue this work with our interfaith partners at Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, Raindrop Turkish House and St. Mark’s Episcopal Church among many others. Together we denounce all forms of racism and discrimination. But now, more than ever, we must commit to being effective allies and use our voices and influence towards tangible social change.

We know that many of you are searching for concrete ways to respond to the current crisis while managing already present economic and emotional anxieties connected to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have compiled a list of [antiracism](#) resources as well as statements from the [URJ](#), [CCAR](#), and [JFSA](#) in the wake of George Floyd’s death.

Additionally, on Thursday, June 11th, Rabbi Nathan will participate in an interfaith panel with Pastor Kenneth Kemp, M.D., Imam Omar Shakir, Rev. Dr. Claudette Copeland and Pastor Garret Vickery, hosted by the UT Health Center for Medical Humanities and Ethics to explore what meaningful anti-racism activism could look like in 2020 and how we might begin to restore hope, equity and peace among us all. A link to register for this webinar will be available soon.

As the Talmud teaches, if we save just one life by speaking out for justice then we will have, in fact, done something to save the world. We have a long way to go but are committed to doing what we can to be agents of change towards a more just and equitable life for all.

L’Shalom,

Mara S. Nathan, Senior Rabbi

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