

# TEN DAYS OF AWE RACIAL JUSTICE REFLECTIONS

## #10days10ways



The process of reflection is built into the Jewish calendar. From Rosh Hashanah, during the ten day period that culminates in Yom Kippur, we are instructed by our tradition to look deeply into ourselves and conduct a *cheshbon ha'nefesh*, an accounting of our soul, to examine how we may have missed the mark in the past year. While each person must face their individual actions, our prayers - *ashamnu, bagadnu* (we have sinned, we have transgressed) -- require us to recognize and take responsibility for our collective failures. Only through honest self-examination as to whether our actions align with our values can we *turn, repent*, can we do *t'shuvah*.

**This year, we are asking the Temple Israel community to consider focusing on racial inequality as a lens through which we examine our lives.** In our tradition, all human beings are created *b'tselem Elohim*, in the image of God, and, therefore, connected and equal to one another. The Racial Justice Initiative at TI has compiled a series of readings, podcasts, art, cartoons, music, and suggestions for experiences and actions designed to frame individual and communal reflection on issues of racial inequality, privilege, discrimination and injustice. **We invite you to choose one, a few, or all of the activities as you look back on the past year and forward to the year ahead.**

The Racial Justice Initiative will provide space for reflection on this process after the High Holy Days, and we will continue this important work in the coming year. To learn more about the Racial Justice Initiative at Temple Israel, email Community Organizer Tali Puterman at [tputerman@tisrael.org](mailto:tputerman@tisrael.org).

Join our Ten Days of Awe/Racial Justice Reflections Facebook group [here](#).  
Signup [here](#) if you would like to be included in a reflective community conversation after the High Holy Days on this experience.

### Day 1: Wednesday

9/20 Erev Rosh Hashanah

Take the [Implicit Association Test](#) (5 minutes).

The Implicit Association Test helps us uncover our deeply held biases around race.

Reflect on your results; what did you learn about yourself?

**Day 2: Thursday****9/21 Rosh Hashanah**

- Read one or both of the following articles about wealth and race

1. [The Average Black Family Would Need 228 Years to Build the Wealth of a White Family Today](#)

2. [White Economic Privilege Is Alive and Well](#)

What surprised you?

**Day 3: Friday****9/22**

- Watch this Ted Talk, [We Need to Talk About an Injustice \(March 2012\)](#) (23 minutes), by Bryan Stevenson.
- Alternatively, [read this short piece from the Religious Action Center of the Union for Reform Judaism](#) about the Days of Awe and Criminal Justice

What did you learn?

**Day 4: Saturday****9/23**

- Choose one of the following black-owned restaurants to visit for a meal
1. [MIDA](#) (Italian-inspired food), South End/Roxbury
  2. [Darryl's Corner Bar and Kitchen](#) (Southern style dishes with live music), Boston
  3. [Blue Nile Restaurant](#) (vegan Ethiopian cuisine), Jamaica Plain
  4. [Suya Joint](#) (West African cuisine), Roxbury

What did you notice? What did you wonder?

**Day 5: Sunday****9/24**

Choose one of these ways to spend your day. These selected activities will provide experiences in environments that are racially diverse.

- 1. Explore two Boston neighborhoods, Back Bay and Dudley Square. Choose your starting point and travel between the two on the Orange Line (Back Bay Station and Roxbury Crossing).

What is different about the two neighborhoods? What's the same?

- 2. Alternatively, read [this article](#) about supporting local neighborhoods and entrepreneurs

What did you learn?

**Day 6: Monday****9/25**

- Watch this performance [Breaking the Chains](#) (10 minutes), from [Teen Empowerment's 25 Years of Impact Celebration](#).

- Alternatively, study [Jacob Lawrence's artwork](#) from his Migration Series (1941).

What are the "chains" in these pieces that need to be broken?

- Optional Art Activity: Draw the feeling of being ENSLAVED using only your MARKS (lines, dots and dashes). Draw the feeling of FREEDOM. Compare these two drawings.

**Day 7: Tuesday****9/26**

- Read Ta-Nehisi Coates article, [The Case for Reparations](#), *The Atlantic* (June 2014).

When you finish reading, consider: I used to think \_\_\_\_\_ about the history of black people in the United States; now I think \_\_\_\_\_ .

- Alternatively, study [this cartoon](#) illustrating the difference between equity and equality.

What do you think?

**Day 8: Wednesday****9/27**

- Listen to the two-part podcast series [This American Life: The Problem We All Live With](#) (2 hours).

Consider this question adapted from [Culture & Youth Studies](#): Have you had a similar experience to anyone in this story? How does your experience inform your understanding of this issue?

- Alternatively, listen to these three Solange Knowles songs from the [album, A Seat at the Table](#).

Interlude: This Moment/Where Do We Go

Interlude: Dad Was Mad [explicit]/Mad

Interlude: Tina Taught Me/Don't Touch My Hair [explicit]

Consider the perspective of the artist and her guests.

**Day 9: Thursday****9/28**

- As part of our work in coalition with the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO), call your [State Senator and Representative](#) to urge them to support Senate Bill 819 and House Bill 741, which would repeal mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent drug crimes. Even better, tweet your support and post your position on your legislators' Facebook pages. [Here is guidance](#) for this action and [here an ACLU Fact Sheet](#) on the legislation.
- Challenge: Ask your family members and friends who live outside of Greater Boston to do contact their legislators, too!
- Alternatively, attend part of the First Session of the Boston Municipal Court (Dorchester), which runs from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at 510 Washington Street.

**Day 10; Friday****9/29, Erev Yom Kippur**

With the Jewish New Year, we blow the shofar (a ram's horn) as a wake up call, motivating us to reflect on our actions and intentions in the year past and calling us to enter the new year as our best selves.

- How did this journey through the 10 Days of Awe/Racial Justice Reflections help you to wake up to the reality of racial inequality and injustice? In what ways was it a call to action? How can we as individuals and our community assist in this effort?
- Draw or write your reactions and share it in our [Facebook group](#).