

JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE
TRIANGLE NC



קוֹל יְהוּדִי לְשָׁלוֹם



Hanukkah 5782

A NOTE FROM OUR CHAPTER

This is our second pandemic Hanukkah, and the year that has passed between this one and the last has brought a continuation of the collective grief, loss, and trauma of the initial COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic rages on, 2021 has further revealed the contradictions all around us. Corporations, abetted by nation states, hoard profits rather than allowing vaccines to be mass-produced the world over; workers toil without adequate pay or protection as their CEOs rake in soaring profits; the virus spreads. As of writing, more than 777,000 people in the United States have died of COVID-19. Alongside the pandemic, the year began with an attempted coup at the Capitol by a white supremacist mob; amidst vaccine apartheid, Israeli airstrikes, police, and military killed nearly 300 Palestinians in the May crisis. This has been another year of grief.

But as with last year, this one has brought moments of connection, light, and even joy. Scientists produced some of the most highly effective vaccines ever created -- many of us were vaccinated and could see family members and friends in person for the first time in more than a year. We celebrated parts of the High Holidays in person with old and new JVP-Triangle members and friends. We continued to connect virtually, taking with us the benefits of connecting online. Workers across the country built unions and went on strike, and a new wave of actionable solidarity with the people of Palestine arose during the crisis in May. We marched with our friends in solidarity with the people of Palestine here in the Triangle and around the world.

In the northern hemisphere, Hanukkah is a time of light in winter's darkness, a recollection of hope in the face of persecution, persistence and dedication, a time, for some, to believe in miracles. As we acknowledge our grief and rage, we also recall our power, the power we have when we join together in service of a vision that connects and contextualizes our own struggles within a worldwide pursuit of justice. In this booklet, we have dedicated a theme to focus our energies on each night of Hanukkah that relates to our charge of tzedek, tzedek tirdof (justice, justice shall you pursue) and kindles faith in the future we can usher in.

Please join in as our chapter gathers online each night of Hanukkah this year at 6:30 pm Eastern. Chapter members will lead candle lighting blessings followed by activities or actions to bring us together in the pursuit of collective liberation. Note that the eighth and final night's festivities will begin earlier - in person at 4:30 and at 5:00 pm online.

NIGHT ONE | WONDER

Kid-centered evening (open to adults); please join us for this night of storytelling, song, and games. Led by educator, actor, parent, and JVP member Rebecca Fox.

Hanukkah, Oh, Hanukkah
Come light the menorah
Let's have a party
We'll all dance the hora
Gather 'round the table,
I'll give you a treat
Dreidels to play with and
latkes to eat

And while we are playing
The candles are burning low
One for each night, they shed a sweet light
To remind us of days long ago
One for each night, they shed a sweet light
To remind us of days long ago

traditional version:

I have a little dreidel
I made it out of clay
and when it's dry and ready,
then dreidel I shall play!

silly version:

(what's your dreidel made of?)

I have a little dreidel
I made it out of _____
and when it's dry and ready,
then dreidel I shall _____!

Example:

I have a little dreidel, I made it out of chocolate milk,
and when it's dry and ready, then dreidel I shall swim!

NIGHT TWO | RELEASE

Led by plant breeding postdoc and JVP member Keo.

“The sabbatical year (‘shmita’) is no less central in the Torah than is Shabbat itself. Six days you should work, and on the seventh you should rest; six years you should work the land, and engage in commerce; in the seventh year (somehow) the land should rest, you should rest, and debts should be annulled.”

- From [The Hazon Shmita Sourcebook](#) by Yigal Deutscher, Anna Hanau, and Nigel Savage

This Rosh Hashanah marked the beginning of the Jewish year 5782 -- a *shmita* year. The Hebrew root of the word *shmita* is שׁמַטָּה (shin-mem-tet), which means “to loosen” or “to release.” As Hanukkah leads us into the last days of this secular year, what are you ready to let go?

NIGHT THREE | PRACTICE

Led by nerd and JVP member CP.

Hanukkah asks us to cultivate a sustained, time-bound ritual of candle-lighting over a period of eight nights, each one building on the last. Lighting Hanukkah candles becomes a daily practice, along with the blessings.

What are you practicing daily to build or hone new skills? What are some of your resilience practices? For those of us in the movement for Palestinian liberation, what practices help us stay grounded through difficult periods, conflict, and state repression? How is a practice different from a routine? How does practice help us feel deeper into our commitments?

Activity:

Think about a new skill you have learned over the past year (it doesn't have to be fancy!) What did it feel like to practice at the beginning? What emotions and bodily sensations came up to do something that didn't feel familiar? What stories keep you from practicing something that feels difficult?

NIGHT FOUR | DOUBT

Led by therapist, JVP member, and dork Danya Holtzman.

When we think of the Hanukkah tale we all grew up hearing, we remember the point in the story when the Maccabees find a small amount of oil in the temple. At this point, they are fearful that the oil will only last one night, which would only ensure that the lamp would be lit for one night. The Maccabees doubt.

What is one time during the fight for a free Palestine in which you felt doubt? What event(s) inspired this feeling in you? How did you feel about yourself or about the movement when you experienced this feeling? Has anything brought you out of that feeling, and if so, what was it?

What could be the benefit of doubt?

NIGHT FIVE | SOLIDARITY

Led by legal worker and JVP Member Emerson and public health graduate student and JVP member Marlo.

“Dark Testament” (excerpt) by Pauli Murray

*Then let the dream linger on,
Let it be the test of nations,
Let it be the quest of all our days,
The fevered pounding of our blood,
The measure of our souls—
That none shall rest in any land
And none return to dreamless sleep,
No heart be quieted, no tongue be stilled
Until the final man may stand in any place
And thrust his shoulders to the sky,
Friend and brother to every other man.*

JVP-Triangle has been taking action with the #UnmaskingFidelity campaign in recent months, taking on Fidelity Charitable -- the largest charity in the United States. The campaign finds that, “Fidelity has been channeling critical financing for nearly every rightwing political formation in the United States, funding anti-trans legislation, groups advocating the Muslim Ban, the criminalization of African immigrants, and much more. These events and policies aren’t happenstance--they are part of a well-funded machine of white supremacist violence of which Fidelity plays a critical and enabling role.”

Beneficiaries include Turning Point USA, an organization that is connected to the January 6th attacks on the Capitol, Alliance Defending Freedom, an organization that defended forced sterilization of transgender people and, Center for Security Policy, whose biased research underpinned the recently overturned Muslim Ban. Fidelity Charitable is also contributing to the Central Fund of Israel, best known as the leading supporter of Israeli organizations behind illegal settlements and displacement of Palestinians. Fidelity has sent them over \$25 million in the past four years.

Activity: Sign on to the [disclose letter](#) and check out the campaign’s [website](#) to learn more.

NIGHT SIX | BLESSINGS

Led by somatic and energy healer, artisan, artist, and JVP member Sarryn Shapero

BLESSINGS



NIGHT SEVEN | DEDICATION

Led by educator, artist, and JVP member Beth.

Rewriting Our Stories

"Mattathias calls upon people loyal to the traditions of Israel to oppose the invaders *and the Jewish Hellenizers*, and his sons begin a military campaign against them" (emphasis added).

How do we interact responsibly with problematic texts from our tradition? Can we acknowledge the harm they've caused, and then, without attempting to erase that history, transform these texts into something new?

Prolific author Walter Dean Myers would, according to his son Chris, state that "it's all in the rewrite." On one level, he was describing his writing process where he would begin by quickly writing out the plot of a story before going back and rewriting, including the details that would bring the story to life. At the Coretta Scott King Awards Ceremony following Walter's death, Chris elaborated on that idea of the rewrite as a philosophy of how we can perceive the reality of the world as it is and then transform it.

Activity: Select a powerful text, sacred or otherwise, from your culture that feels wrong in some way. Consider it. Wrestle with it. Respect the hold it has had. Try to find positive implications. When you're ready, rewrite it. Transform it into something ethical. Turn it into something that reverberates with your soul so you feel your insides hum.

Think about how you can dedicate or rededicate yourself to envisioning and pursuing what is possible, even if success might require a miracle.

NIGHT EIGHT | COMMUNITY

"There is no separate survival."

- Audre Lorde

Gather in person (outdoors) and online. We will light Hanukkahs together, sing, play, and celebrate our joint survival. ❤️