

15 Days Completed

Learning Focus

Here I am ready to consider **deeper costs** of engagement on this journey,
undertaking to know more each day about the workings of oppression,
so that we might get ourselves, all of us,
out from under this millstone that is the Narrow Place.

In 2010, a DC-based group held an interdenominational service including participants from many communities; some of that diversity appears in this photo (L-to-R): havurah member (tallit, no head covering); Modern Orthodox woman (hat, no tallit; reading from the Torah); then-Reform woman (kippah and tallit, as gabbai); Conservative woman (tallit, no head covering). Two are white-gray-haired, two blond-ish; three are white, and one is Black.



Three years later, *Forward/JTA* used this photo, captioned: "A non-Jewish woman is among those at a Torah reading....," to illustrate interfaith worship. Upon complaint, the photo was removed from the story where it did not belong. No apology.

Sabrina Sojourner (above, second from right) was not surprised. Even at synagogues where she was a member or regular visitor, she had been asked -- no matter how Jewishly she was garbed -- "how are you Jewish?!" or mistaken for Christian clergy, sometimes for kitchen staff. It happens that this incidence was documented, but Jews of Color face narrow-minded assumptions when engaging all the time. Black Jews in particular are harassed by synagogue security or "greeters" taught to be wary of anyone who "doesn't belong," sometimes refused entry, and -- in one Brooklyn case -- attacked for carrying a Torah scroll.

Many Jews of Color are driven, at least temporarily, away from Jewish life... a reality all Jews need to address, Chaplain Sojourner recently taught, until every Jewish community is a place where those "who do not fit the mold" can "be seen, loved, comforted, consoled, soothed, celebrated, and honored because living within this skin is sometimes just too much."

Have you been asked, "Why are you here?" "Did someone invite you?"
upon arrival at your place of worship or other gathering spot?

Are you regularly assumed, by strangers, to belong in Jewish spaces? Do you feel welcome and safe when facing security guards/"greeters"?

Has your worship community discussed the impact of such a presence on members, visitors, and others in the neighborhood?

Ritual Focus

Here I am, ready and prepared

[use traditional *kavanah* and/or continue here]

Here I am, ready and prepared to fulfill this project of counting 49 days,
from Narrowness to Expansion,
seeking to examine oppression and envision liberation,
inspired by the Torah's counting of the Omer,
counting seven full weeks, from Liberation to Revelation,
until I reach fifty days,
and prepare to bring new thoughts before the Eternal and into the world.

Bless

[See "Blessing" page for masculine or feminine God-language]

Brukheh ateh YHVH

Elohéinu hei ha'olamim

asher kidshétnu

bəmitzvotéihe vatzivétnu

al sefirat ha'omer

ברוכה אתה יהוה

אלהינו הי העולמים

אשר קדשחנו

במצוותיה וצונו

על ספירת העמר

Blessed are you, YHVH,
our God, Life of endless worlds,
who made us holy
with Voix commandments and commanded us
to count the Omer.

Count

היום ששה עשר יום שהם שני שבועות ושני ימים לעמר

Hayom shishah asar yom shehem sh'nei shavuot ushnei yamim la-omer

Today is sixteen days, which is two weeks and two days of the Omer

**visit <http://Rereading4Liberation.com> for more on Recounting Exodus
and Rereading Exodus along the Anacostia**