

## 17 Days Completed

### Learning Focus

Here I am ready to consider **humanizing** and its limits 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.

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Before Cross River Dialogue, I struggled with the gap between my work and residence, where gun violence is regular, and place of worship where gun violence is rare and was then rarely mentioned. Attempting to put faces to statistics, I suggested focusing on Hadiya Pendleton, a 15-year-old Chicagoan gunned down (1/29/13), shortly after participating in Obama's second Inauguration parade. From two of my congregational addresses:

**2013:** ...Our segregated lives mean many of us do not personally know young people killed in street violence. I once lived only blocks from the park where Hadiya was killed, e.g, but rarely visited the area between 43rd and 47th streets. I know many residents of DC who, similarly, rarely cross an intersection where shootings are an all-too-regular fact of life.

Therefore, I ask those relatively untouched by the violence that besets too many of our neighborhoods and robs too many of our fellow citizens of their childhoods, if not their lives, to take Hadiya Pendleton's life into their hearts and mourn her passing.

**2014:** [Michelle Obama] rightly points out how just a few urban blocks can mean the difference between a life rich in possibility and one circumscribed by need and loss. I would add that we cannot allow those few blocks – or even a few miles – to insulate us from our neighbors' grief...

In Chicago, DC, and other cities, whole neighborhoods like Hadiya's have become stragglers on the road out of bondage, filled with youth who are hungry and weary and, all too often, vulnerable to attack. Until all teens like Hadiya can safely hang out in the local parks, we have failed to blot out the name of Amalek (Deut 25:17-19, read that week, for "Shabbat Zachor").

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**Can empathy and action** be stirred through "putting a face" on statistics?

**Can we understand** a wider problem through one "human face" alone?

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## 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*

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה

*Elohéinu hei ha'olamim*

אֱלֹהֵינוּ חַי הַעוֹלָמִים

*asher kidshétnu*

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ

*bəmitzvotéihe vatzivétnu*

בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְצִוִּיתָנוּ

*al sefirat ha'omer*

עַל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר

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

הַיּוֹם שְׁמוֹנֶה עָשָׂר יוֹם שֶׁהֵם שְׁנַי שְׁבוּעוֹת וְאַרְבָּעָה יָמִים לְעֹמֶר

*Hayom sh'monah asar yom  
shehem sh'nei shavuot v'arbaah yamim la-omer.*

Today is eighteen days, which is two weeks and four days of the Omer.

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