

## 40 Days Completed

### Learning Focus

Here I am ready to consider **commercial displacement** 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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Economics of Genesis and early Exodus play out in commercial real estate, too: One day invited to tend the ruler's cattle; the next, told to clear off.

In DC and around the country, property owners in under-valued areas gladly house funkier enterprises for lower rent, with gleeful declaration that owners value local culture and business.... until markets shift. Then "not knowing Joseph" manifests, with local concerns eclipsed in the face of higher sale prices or more upscale tenants. This pattern is often treated as an inevitable aspect of capitalism, normalizing the perspective that some segments of the economy can be viewed as expendable, obstacles to profit.

Businesses owned by two Cross River Dialogue participants were nearly lost to this cycle. The story is offered here as an illustration of the precarious line between stability and displacement -- even if this one does have something of a happy ending...so far.

After years of operating on a long-neglected stretch of MLK Avenue SE, We Act Radio and Check-IT Enterprises plus an adjacent business were about to lose their homes as the property owner cashed in on increasing property values. CRD participants and others testified to the DC Council's Business and Economic Development Committee, who seemed to agree that losing the three storefronts to a chain store -- which many feared would lead to domino-development all the way down MLK Avenue -- should be avoided. The committee, then full Council, approved a grant for purchase of the property, making possible the new Go-Go Museum and preserving the three storefronts in Downtown Historic Anacostia.

Three businesses, owned or co-owned by local Black entrepreneurs, continue to operate -- as does shared community space behind the storefronts. Meanwhile, however, the immediate vicinity is changing drastically, as long-planned, and long stalled, development in the area takes shape.

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**Is encouraging** low-rent, funkier businesses when times are hard, then pushing them out when values go up, an example of not-knowing-Joseph "moral deficiency" discussed in Day 25? If so, how can it be prevented?

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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*

*Elohéinu hei ha'olamim*

*asher kidshétu*

*bəmitzvotéihe vatzivétu*

*al sefirat ha'omer*

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה

אֱלֹהֵינוּ חַי הָעוֹלָמִים

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ

בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְצִוִּיתָנוּ

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 אֶחָד וָאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם שֶׁהֵם חֲמִשָּׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשִׁשָּׁה יָמִים לְעֹמֶר.

*Hayom echad v'arbaim yom*

*shehem chamishah shavuot v'shishah yamim la-omer*

Today is forty-one days, which is five weeks and six days of the Omer

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