Tonight we talk of four people who believe in racial justice. They are you and me; people with a variety of lived and learned experience and intersecting identities. **What do they say?** They are Jewish people and non-Jews alike asking questions, engaging with and working towards racial justice. **How do we answer?** We call them in with compassion, we hold them accountable, we learn from those who came before us.

**WHAT DOES A QUESTIONER SAY?**

“I support equality, but the tactics and strategies used by current racial justice movements make me uncomfortable.”

Time and time again during the journey through the desert, the Israelites had to trust a vision of a more just future that the Israelites could not see themselves. They argued that there must be an easier way, a better leader, and a better God. They grumbled to Moses and Aaron in Exodus 16:3, “For you have brought us out into this wilderness to starve this whole community to death.”

In the midst of our work, there are times when we struggle to identify our own promised land. We see this challenge in various social movements and only when we study these movements in depth, we see that many pushes for progress and liberation endure similar struggles, indecision, and pushback.

**WHAT DOES A JEW OF COLOR SAY?**

I don’t often see myself represented in my community and seldom hear my stories, how can I stay engaged in a community that doesn’t reflect my identity?

When our Jewish communities do not fully represent the ethnic and racial diversity of all Jews, we are responsible to question, call out, and call in our institutional leadership to assure that all Jews feel welcomed, included, and represented in Jewish spaces.

Before Moses killed the taskmaster who was beating up an Israelite slave, “he looked around and didn’t see anyone” (Exodus 2:12). The next day, an Israelite who knew of the incident said to him, “Who made you our ruler?” (Exodus 2:14). Similarly, we must make sure to agitate in our communities so that Jews whose ‘authenticity’ is questioned (Jews of Color, LGBTQIA Jews, and Jews with disabilities) are seen, included, and represented.

**WHAT DOES A NEWCOMER SAY?**

How can I acknowledge my privilege in a way that works towards elevating the voices of marginalized people in my community?

The Passover story is about the process of moving from oppression to liberation. Liberation is not easy: it demands us to contribute our time and resources for the greater good, even if it makes us uncomfortable.

In the desert, the Israelites constructed the Mishkan (Tabernacle) together. Exodus 35:29 says, “[T]he Israelites, all the people whose hearts moved them to bring anything for the work that God, through Moses, had commanded to be done, brought it as a freewill offering to God.” Those of us looking to engage in racial justice work can learn from that example. We need to consistently show up, on a path to confronting and exploring our individual privileges and oppressions.

**WHAT DOES AN AVOIDER SAY?**

“I am so scared of being called a racist, I don’t want to engage in any conversations about race.”

Having conversations about race and racism can be hard and uncomfortable, and we all make mistakes. It’s an essential part of the process. When Joseph began having dreams, he told his brothers that they would eventually bow down to him. In Genesis 37:8, Joseph’s brothers replied, "‘Do you mean to rule over us?’ And they hated him even more for his talk about his dreams.”

Joseph honed the way that he shared interpretations of dreams, and used them to survive in Pharaoh’s palace. He learned from his mistake with his brothers, and his ability helped him to reunite with his family. We can learn from Joseph to overcome mistakes, even when talking about race, by continuing to show up and engage.