

RACIAL JUSTICE SERVICE LEARNING

TEXT ONE: RED, BLACK, WHITE, AND GREEN

THE FOLLOWING TEXT COMES FROM YALKUT SHIMONI, A MEDIEVAL COMPILATION OF NON-LEGAL JEWISH TEXTS THAT PROVIDE CONTEXTUAL STORIES AND COMMENTARIES ON BIBLICAL PASSAGES. THIS PASSAGE TALKS ABOUT THE CREATION OF THE FIRST HUMAN.

God gathered the dust of the first human from the four corners of the world — red, black, white, and green. Red is the blood, black is the innards, and green is the body. Why from the four corners of the earth? So that if a person comes from the east to the west, and arrives at life's end, ready to leave this world, that piece of earth will not say to the person, "The dust of your body is not mine! Go back to where you were created!" Rather, every place that a person walks, from there their body was created, and to there it will return.¹

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Does the fact that it describes different body parts as being made from specific colors undermine the message that humans should not reject one another?
- Through today's volunteering, how could we make spaces that reject the notion of "**The dust of your body is not mine! Go back to where you are created!**"?

TEXT TWO: I HAVE A DREAM

THE FOLLOWING QUOTE, BY REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., IS EXCERPTED FROM HIS FAMOUS "I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH THAT HE DELIVERED DURING THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON IN AUGUST, 1963.

"And I say to you today my friends, let freedom ring. From the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire, let freedom ring. From the mighty mountains of New York, let freedom ring. From the mighty Alleghenies of Pennsylvania! Let freedom ring from the snow capped Rockies of Colorado! Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California!

But not only there; let freedom ring from the Stone Mountain of Georgia! Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain in Tennessee! Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill in Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring."²

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How is King's focus on geography similar to the first text? How is it different?
- The first text seems to refer to people who move from their birthplace to another land. The Civil Rights Movement fought for rights for people who were disenfranchised and oppressed in their own lands. In light of this difference, in what ways do they speak to one another and in what ways do they speak past one another.
- What role can volunteering play in creating the societies that are envisioned in the two texts?

