

We of P'nai Or join the struggle against systemic racism that pervades our society - and abhor the racist violence and police brutality perpetrated against people of color.

We support this statement of our Philadelphia Board of Rabbis

## “Justice, justice shall you pursue”

Deuteronomy 16:20

The Board of Rabbis of Greater Philadelphia, representing 150 rabbis from diverse movements and streams of Judaism, is outraged by the murder of George Floyd, as well as the deaths of hundreds of other black and brown people at the hands of police in recent years. These tragic deaths of our siblings, part of our human family, reveal once again the depths of the structural racism that pervades our country and that prevents its people from truly living out the promise of the verse from the Torah that is written on the Liberty Bell, proclaiming liberty throughout the land for all of its inhabitants.

We confess our own complicity, whether conscious or unwitting, in perpetuating the racist structures of our society by closing our eyes to the suffering of people of color, both within the Jewish community and in our larger society. We acknowledge that we have failed to address the racism in our Jewish institutions and in our Jewish communities. We are ashamed of how that racism has prevented black Jews and all Jews of color from participating fully in Jewish life. We know that we are called to be a “light to the nations,” and that it is our sacred obligation not only to reject racism but also to make our institutions and communities actively anti-racist, opposing the forces of society that oppress human beings because of the color of their skin.

We know that stepping up to our obligations to people of color, truly fulfilling the Torah’s mandate to pursue justice, is not accomplished in a moment. It takes sustained effort and commitment, and we pledge to take it on with all of the love and passion that we pour into the other religious obligations that are central to our lives as Jews and as Jewish leaders.

Through these efforts, we hope to provide our community members with resources to gain insights, knowledge, and tools to enable them to guide their institutions and communities in the paths of peace toward an anti-racist future. We will follow the lead of Jews of color and the wisdom of other communities of color to learn what we need to know, what we need to do, and how best to do it.

“Rabbi Tarfon said: The day is short, the task is great...” (Pirkei Avot 2:20).

We know that the road to an anti-racist future will be long and difficult. But our rabbinic tradition teaches us that with our effort and God’s help, justice for all can be achieved. We invite our Jewish community and all communities to join with us as we do the hard work of systemic change.

B'tikvah,  
in hope and solidarity