

## **Our Prayer**

This exercise can be done in a class setting, or done by an individual on their own.

- 1.) Think about something that is going on in our society that is currently concerning to you or about which you have questions. This could be related to racism, antisemitism, policing, climate change, or another concern you have.
- 2.) Now, write your concerns, observations, and questions down on a sheet of paper.
- 3.) Do some research connected to what you wrote down. Use the internet, talk to your colleagues and friends, and watch/listen to programs related to the topic. It is important at this phase to engage with sources not necessarily usual to you or to pieces of writing that dive into the material in new ways.
- 4.) As you do this research, take notes and make lists of important and surprising things you hear, read, and see. Be sure to write down exact quotes and precise statistics from what you read, watch, and listen to, and from your discussions, as these will become the basis for the rest of the exercise.
- 5.) Choose a prayer or liturgical poem that you are familiar with or that you think is particularly resonant with what you have been exploring.
- 6.) Familiarize yourself with the prayer's structure by reading it over a few times and, if possible, do a bit of internet sleuthing. It is especially important to spend time on the structure and how the prayer operates.
- 7.) Now, consider the topic you have been exploring, and think about what you want to say about it. Write a first line to a new prayer about the topic that borrows the structure of the first line of the prayer you have chosen. This first line might set your intention for this piece.

For example, if you have chosen the Unetaneh Tokef and its first line is:

*"We shall ascribe holiness to this day."*

And you have chosen gender equity as your topic, you might write:

*"We shall ensure equity in the time to come."*

## UNETANEH TOKEF FOR BLACK LIVES

for adult and teen learners



8.) Once you have this first line, create your own version of the prayer, using its structure to write a piece about your subject matter. Use the specific quotes and figures that you have collected throughout the writing, interwoven with your own reflections, allowing those pieces of “found” text to make up at least half of the prayer’s words.

9.) Your prayer is complete. Read it and share it as you see fit.

Or

10.) If performing this exercise in a class or with a group, gather the prayers together and put them in a booklet to share back to the class or group.