



# Dismantling Racism from the Inside Out

Anti-Racist Anavah/Humility

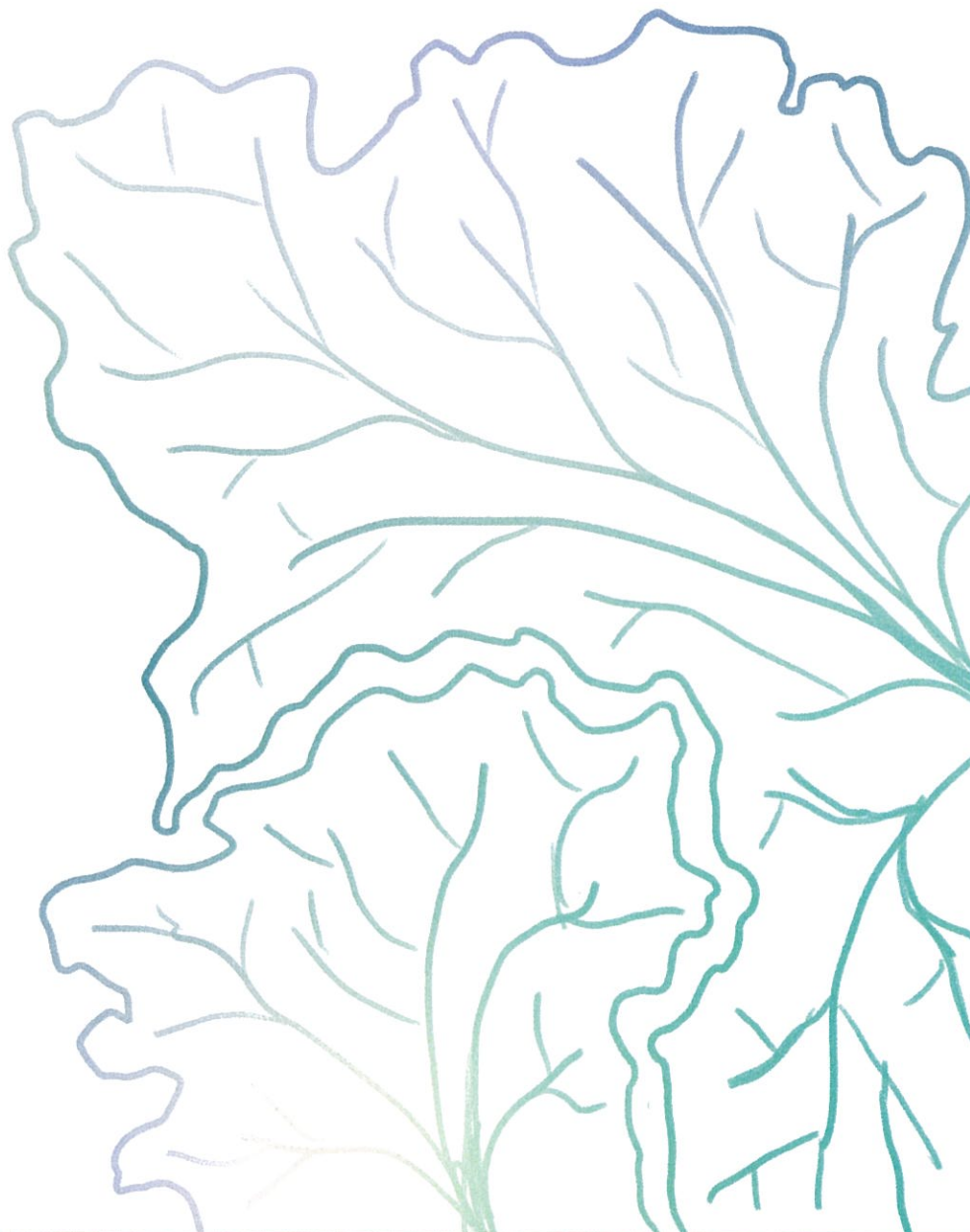


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## COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

- Impact and intent
- Practice “both and” in contrast to “either or”
- Move up and Move back
- Confidentiality: what’s said here stays here what’s learned here leaves here
- Brave Space



# Anavah/Humility Torah Learning

## INTRODUCTION

Anavah - א.נ.ו.ה - comes from the root for impoverished, but also for response/answer



## SOURCE ONE

**Moshe (Moses) at the Burning Bush: Shemot (Exodus) 3:1-4 and Rashi to Bereishit (Genesis) 22:1**

<p>Now Moshe, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, drove the flock into the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of Elohim.</p> <p>An angel of YHVH appeared to him in a blazing fire out of a bush. He gazed, and there was a bush all aflame, yet the bush was not consumed.</p> <p>Moshe said, “I must turn aside to look at this marvelous sight; why doesn’t the bush burn up?”</p> <p>When YHVH saw that he had turned aside to look, Elohim called to him out of the bush: “Moshe! Moshe!” He (Moshe) answered, “Here I am.”</p>	<p>ומֹשֶׁה הִנֵּה רֹעֵה אֶת־צֹאן יִתְרוֹ חֹתָנוּן פָּהוּ מִדֵּגוּ וַיִּנְהַג אֶת־הַצֹּאן אַחַר הַמִּדְבָּר וַיָּבֹא אֶל־הַר הָאֱלֹהִים חֲרִבָּה:</p> <p>וַיֵּרָא מִלֵּאֲפִי יְהוָה אֵלָיו בְּלִבְת־אֵשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֵּרָא וַהֲמַה הַסִּנֵּה בַעֲרָ בָאֵשׁ וְהַסִּנֵּה אֵינְנוֹ אֶקָּל:</p> <p>וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְבֶּה־נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת־הַמַּרְאֶה הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה מִדּוֹעַ לֹא־יִבְעַר הַסִּנֵּה:</p> <p>וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי סָר לִרְאֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹהִים מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי:</p>
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<p><b>Rashi on Bereishit (Genesis) 22:1</b></p>	<p>רש"י על בראשית כב:א</p>
<p>Here I am/Hineini – This is the response of the pious. This (Hineini) implies Anavah/humility and alacrity.</p>	<p>הנני – כך היא עניינתם של חסידים לשון ענוה הוא ולשון זימנן</p>

## SOURCE ONE REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What about Moshe’s response, “Hineni/Here I am” evokes humility?
- What aspects of your racialized identity do you need to overcome to fully show up?
- What aspects of your identities help you show up?



## SOURCE TWO

### Talmud Bavli Brachot 6b with Dr. Alan Morinis commentary

Rabbi Helbo said according to Rav Huna: Anyone who makes a set place (Makom) for his prayer, Elohay Abraham helps him. When he dies it is said about him that he was an Anav (humble person), a Hasid (a pious person) and one of the students of Abraham our ancestor.

אמר רבי חלבו אמר רב הונא כל הקובע מקום לתפלתו  
אלהי אברהם בעזרו וכשמת אומרים לו אי עניו אי חסיד  
מתלמידיו של אברהם אבינו

*What is the relationship between making a set place for prayer and Anava? Dr. Alan Morinis writes that the main issue is about space. When we say that this seat is mine, we are also saying that that other seat is not mine. By making a set place we are also creating space for others. According to Morinis, this is the key to Anava. The Anav knows they have a right to space and can judge how much space to take in a given situation. When our Anava is out of balance we take either too little or too much space. Dr. Alan Morinis summarizes this as “No more than my space, no less than my place.” (Everyday Holiness, Dr. Alan Morinis, Chapter 7)*

## SOURCE TWO REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What have your different identities (race, gender, age, other?) taught you about what amount of space you get to/should take in different situations?
- Based on your positionality of the privileged or targeted within White supremacy/anti-Black racism, how has racially informed pride/shame or self worthlessness impacted the space you take?
- What might the proper amount of space look and feel like based on your positionality in racist hierarchies in different situations?



# Racism, White Supremacy and Space Taking

How Anti-Blackness Discourages and Limits the Space Black People Claim

## Racist / White Supremacy Ideologies

*(seed ideas i.e. “Black folks are inherently dangerous”)*

- **Manifest Destiny** - the belief that European descent/ white people/communities deserve and should take up as much space as they want
- **Sub/non-human** - the belief that African descent/ Black peoples/communities are less human and thus deserve and should take up little to no space

## Institutional Manifestation

*(i.e. racist policies)*

- **Tulsa Race Massacre** - historical example of oppressive space taking and denying
- **Prohibiting Learning about Racism in Schools** - current reality of oppressive limiting of space

## Interpersonal Manifestation

*(individual to individual i.e. microaggressions)*

- **Contributions in conversations or meeting** - taking up too much space in multiracial settings

## Internal Manifestation

*(behavior of those targeted by racism):*

- **Silencing self/fellows in conversations or meetings** - not taking or allowing fellows targeted by anti-Black racism to take up space



# Daily Anti-Racist Anavah Avodah

## ACTION KABBALAH CHOOSE ONE PER WEEK

An effective kabbalah has four elements. It is:

**Concrete**

*(you can tell if you did it or not)*

**Small**

**Time-bound**

*(eg. Not all day long)*

**Attached to a routine**

*(that you already do like eating lunch)*

## CHOOSE FROM DOMAINS OF CARE

*Click on a domain for examples*







## CONNECTION WITH YHVH HASHEM

### Connection with YHVH/HaShem

- Through hitbodedut (personal prayer), explore with HaShem the space you take regarding racism and White supremacy. What would it mean for you to show up as your most authentic self?
- Through hitbodedut (personal prayer), explore taking the right amount of space for you to partner with Hashem to dismantle anti-Black racism and white supremacy
- In hitbodedut (personal prayer) express to YHWH the shift in space you know you need to take based on your positionality to disrupt racist hierarchies of power and value. What support from YHVH do you need to make that behavioral shift?
- Pray for the spiritual strength to respond to the needs of the moment with flexibility and fortitude to subvert racist hierarchies of power and value
- Before doing a particularly challenging kabbalah, pray for the success and desired outcome of ultimately disrupting anti-Black racism

When will you practice your kabbalah?

[→ Back to Balance of Care →](#)





### Care for Self:

- If targeted by anti-Blackness, practice speaking first and regularly in majority white and/or multiracial spaces
- Make space for investing in self i.e. preparing a meal/eating, exercising, reading, etc, over a task for someone else or a job
- In communal or shared spaces, i.e. commuting on a bus or common space in a home, occupy the physical space that is appropriate for you, neither shrinking or over-spreading
- Prioritize responding to the needs of your body and healthy before investing in goals of your work/company
- Take the appropriate space based on positionality to share your feelings, thoughts, fears and dreams with others



[→ Back to Balance of Care →](#)





### Care for Fellow

*(specifically those targeted by anti-Black racism):*

- Listen and follow leadership of those targeted by anti-Black racism; Let ideas from fellows targeted by racism take up space in your own life by uplifting it for yourself and others
- Track and adjust contributions to a particular meeting, forum, or social gathering relative to Fellow colleagues and friends targeted by anti-Black racism: **cede space** if not targeted by racism and **take more space** if targeted by anti-Blackness
- Make more space at your dining table for colleagues, acquaintances, and friends that are targeted by anti-Black racism to share in meals and communal joy
- Prioritize responding to requests and needs of those targeted before investing in the desires/needs of those not targeted by anti-Black racism.
- Fight for space for leadership on your board or community group of those targeted by anti-Black racism

When will you practice your kabbalah?

[→ Back to Balance of Care →](#)





### Care for Opponent:

- Make the space to learn about the perspectives of opponents in regards to racial justice
- Make the space to respond to expressions of racism and White supremacy from those in your community be that colleagues, friends or family, offering tochecha (rebuke) when appropriate
- Make the space to be curious about an opponent's (friend/family, colleague) perspectives in regards to white supremacy and racism - listen well (cede space) before responding (take space)
- Take the space to write a letter to a colleague, family or friend about how their opposition to your personal or general efforts of racial justice impact you and fellows targeted by anti-Black racism
- Take the space to share honestly and openly with a colleague, family or friend about how their opposition to your personal or general efforts of racial justice impact you and fellows targeted by anti-Black racism

When will you practice your kabbalah?

→ Back to Balance of Care →



## DAILY CHESHBON HANEFESH REFLECTION

Sit quietly for one minute, allowing your body and mind to relax. After one minute, ask yourself the following questions:

- Where did you notice anavah/humility today in relationship with yourself, fellows, opponents, or HaShem?
- How did it feel in your body?
- How would you like to manifest anavah/humility tomorrow?

Take a few minutes to capture reflections on how anavah/humility showed up in your life today.



When will you  
write in your  
journal  
each day?

# In-Session Anti-Racist Avodah/Practice

## OPTION ONE: TRY ON THE KABBALAH

Try on the daily kabbalah that you chose or journal about the kabbalah, planning out in greater detail when and where you will do it, and the desired outcome.

## OPTION TWO: FOCUS / ANCHOR PHRASE

The Anchor Phrase is one of the three main Mussar practices. We will be doing more with this practice in future sessions. For now repeat the below phrase for 3 minutes while contemplating the small action you plan on doing during the week. Notice the thoughts and feelings that arise while saying the phrase.

**Focus/Anchor Phrase:** “No more than my space, no less than my place” - Dr. Alan Morinis.

## ADDITIONAL LEARNING:

Supplemental learning: [Everyday Holiness](#), “Humility”

# Chevrotah Check-In

1. Trade turns listening to each other about your experience with Anavah/Humility.
  - Talk about the experience with the kabbalot and Cheshbon Hanefesh.
  - Then discuss any insights or challenges with the middah that came up during the week.
2. We recommend choosing one or more of the prompts below for reflection together.
3. Read and discuss the below chevrotah material.
4. End your session with a commitment for practice for the next week and scheduling your next meeting.

Discuss the racist/white supremacist ideologies you've internalized encouraging or denying the amount of space you take (we acknowledge that other aspects of identity impact space taking, like gender and class. You are invited to include these in your reflections). Reflect on which areas you need to give space if not targeted and take space if targeted. Consider these questions:

- Which of these internalized ideologies or patterns of space taking make you feel most defensive when reflecting on that pattern in your life?
- What areas of your personal and professional life do you feel held back from due to the internalized pride, shame or self-worthlessness, etc. (products of unbalanced humility) you hold?
- How does unbalanced humility contribute to a current personal or political conflict you're in?
- How does your relationship with YHVH/The Living Presence impact the space you feel comfortable, entitled and/or obligated to take?

## **Rabbi Bahya Ibn Pekuda (11th Century, Spain) Introduction to Duties of the Heart (Hovot HaLevavot)**

*When I planned to execute my decision to write this book, I saw that one like me is unworthy of writing a book such as this. I surmised that my ability would not suffice to analyze all the necessary aspects, owing to the difficulty which I perceived and to my wisdom being insufficient and my mind being too weak to grasp all of the issues, and that I am not fluent in the Arabic language in which I wrote it. I feared that I would toil at something that would evidence my inability, and that it would be a presumptuous undertaking, so that I considered changing my mind and abandoning my previous decision.*

*But when I designed to remove this laborious burden from myself and desist from composing the work, I reconsidered and became suspicious of myself for having chosen to rest and to dwell in the abode of laziness in peace and tranquility, and I feared that it was the desire of the [evil] passion which was placing this thought [within me], ...and I know that many minds have been lost out of apprehension, and many losses have been caused by fear...if all those involved in good causes...were to remain silent and still until they could completely attain their ideal, no person (man) would ever say a word after the Prophets...who were chosen by HaShem...*


## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

- How does R. Bahya model the types of Anavah we saw in the session with Moshe at the burning bush?
- What experiences have you had with this type of decision?

What is the date and time of your next chevrotah meeting?



THE INSIDE OUT WISDOM and ACTION PROJECT



Deep Gratitude to YHVH / HaShem for this opportunity and collective effort, and appreciation to the great Rabbis and teachers of our tradition upon whose wisdom this curriculum is based.

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