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### **From the Streets of New York**

This movement is about black people and people of color. We march because we have to, because too many black lives have been lost and if survived, have lived unjustly under the tyranny of white supremacy for far too long. We march because we have benefited from the enslavement of black people in America and the racist systems that have remained in the wake of slavery. On Sunday, May 31st we marched in a

peaceful protest in New York City filled with chanting and kneeling, encountering lines of police officers on multiple occasions. With a small group of protestors, we knelt and chanted peacefully in front of a line of police by Bryant Park in Manhattan. Without warning, the group was charged by a dozen cops using bicycles as weapons and we were both violently arrested.

We are okay. We are two able-bodied, white women and although we sustained minor injuries while tackled, we were spared the further violence that so many folks of color experience after the initial moment of arrest and while in police custody. We were detained overnight, but we are and will be okay because of our white privilege.

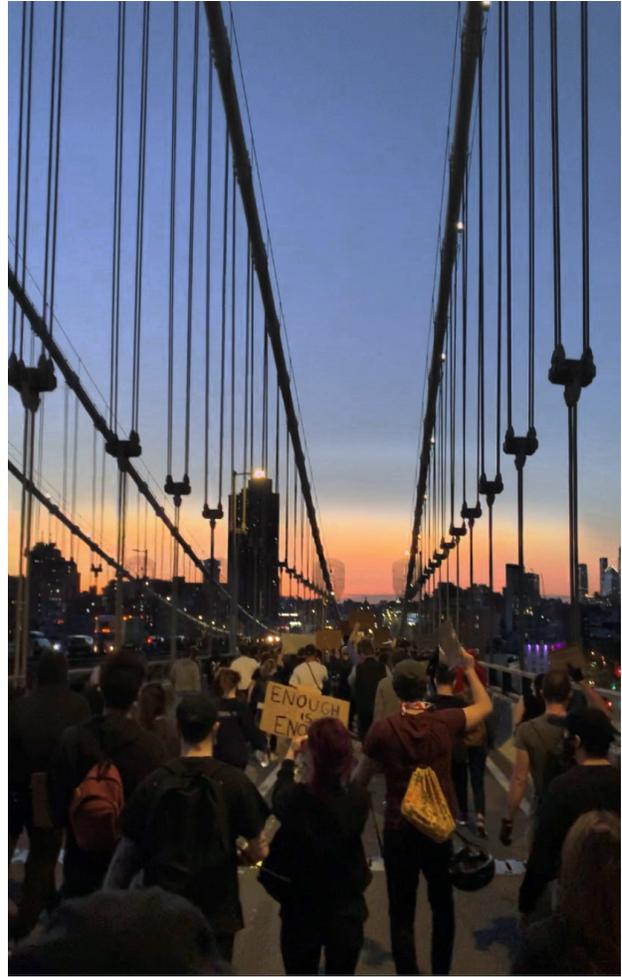
This moment in history is a tipping point for the evolution of human rights in America and across the world. As individuals, we all often seek refuge in the gentleness and ease of our spiritual community. This, in and of itself, is a luxury so many of our human family are not afforded by society. When one willingly puts comfortability and ease aside, one opens the door to real social change through education and action. As mystics, there is no time to waste. The introspective work we already do holds the key to our collective healing. While we are used to examining our individual conditioning, it is time to examine our shared conditioning. We must root in the uncomfortable fact that the sturdy trees of the Western world were planted on stolen land, by the labor of stolen hands. We wandered through the fields freely, while others sowed and threshed our harvests. While slavery no longer exists, our social and cultural systems have continued to perpetrate white supremacy. It has seeped into every level of our society from government, to education, and therefore into our own cognition. As we use spiritual practices to unpack our psychological patterns, we must also unpack our harmful social programming. It is time to take our daily spiritual practice and activate that potency into daily social action-- to use our minds and bodies as wazaif to usher in the presence and power of societal transformation. For love, harmony,

and beauty to be of great value in our lives, we must labor to altruistically contend these liberties as attainable for all.

We believe this is achievable through Love. While tenderness has its time and place, let us not forget the countless forms in which Love manifests. Many of us have encountered the gentle and nurturing aspects of Mother Goddess. Now we must remember the ferocious Mother defending her children at all costs. We cannot shudder away in fear of her power when Mother Goddess appears in her most terrifying forms, but embrace her fury with innovative devotion and divine attention. There are many names for her (Durga, Athena, Ashanti, Demeter, Kali, etc.) and there are many names for oppression (white supremacy, patriarchy, heteronormativity, etc.). The Love we need now is a fierce, relentless, and tactical Love that dissolves untruthfulness and shambled ethics. This is the Love that stares us in the face and calls our bluff when we are not willing to, not able to, or when we are too afraid to face the shadow. This Love is clever and resilient and radical; a Love that is deemed as “tough,” when it is in fact courageously honest. Please, do not shy away. While our black and brown siblings stand peering in through the fence around the garden, only some of us have been allowed to enter through the front gate. Now is the time to prop the door wide open. We can no longer disguise decorum as sanctity, or redistribution as scarcity, for the garden looks best empty if every belly is full and any feast tastes better when everyone is invited to the table.

To White Readers:

For far too long, we have remained complacent to the dire fight for freedom regularly endured by communities of color. It is time to step into the arena with both feet and with full mind, body, and spirit. This work takes time and consistent awareness to unlearn the insidious conditioning of racism. Much like the spiritual path, it is ongoing work. Each step one takes reveals another just beyond it. The work is deeply personal, painful, but ultimately freeing. It requires us to face our shadow and dive into what we are most afraid of: our guilt, our shame, our mistakes. Anti-racism work requires us to face the irrefutable fact that we, as white people, have personally caused harm to black people and people of color in our lives. This painful realization will likely render an experience of ego-death. For example, when a white person responds to the conversation of their privilege with defensiveness, what they're really saying is: “I have a hard time acknowledging and



admitting when I am wrong.” This is the direct result of society centering and uplifting whiteness and white perspective as our social and moral code.

Once we realize the false power our whiteness affords us, we must learn to wield our privilege as a mighty tool that can help rebuild our society rather than continuing to harm our fellow human beings. We must do the work. We are all one family-- the human family. In order to take the necessary steps toward growth, we must first recognize the difference between where we currently are and where we want to be. Many individuals in our beloved community fall into the category of well-meaning liberals. As Martin Luther King so wisely said,

“I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Councilor or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action."

This movement is about black people and people of color. The purpose for our protesting is for one reason only, to protect black bodies and black lives by putting ourselves in harm's way. We know this avenue of protest is not possible for everyone, but this similar motivation of utilizing our privilege as a shield and a weapon is not only crucial, but it is necessary. Do not let fear consume your heart, do not let violence deter your attention, do not let the tranquil lightness of a passive peace bypass the tireless shadow of oppression. At this moment, wishing wellness is simply not enough. We beg you to step up to the urgency of this movement and use your privilege as munition for the sake of all black lives and for the sake of a more peaceful world. Now, while we have the momentum of a worldwide civil rights movement, we must do everything we can to avoid being moderate. We call on you to continue educating yourself about anti-racism and directly support black owned businesses, artists, and communities. Whether you are in a position to attend protests, provide financial support to the movement, reach out to your local representatives, or all of the above, we call on you to do so.



Please follow the links below for resources to take these steps.

[Click here for ways to support \(write emails, make calls, donate money to vetted orgs\) >>](#)

[Click here for media resources for unlearning racism >>](#)