

A Guide For Conversation

Talking to Your Habesha Family About Black Lives Matter

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CONTENT ADVISORY:

**THROUGHOUT THIS DOCUMENT, THERE ARE LINKS, IMAGES,
AND INFORMATION THAT COULD BE DIFFICULT TO PROCESS.**

**PLEASE TAKE THE NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS TO PROTECT
YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THOSE
YOU ARE SHARING THIS INFORMATION WITH.**

**WE ARE IN A SENSITIVE TIME AND WE ALL CARRY OUR OWN
HISTORIES THAT AFFECT US IN DIFFERENT WAYS.**

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES.

**WHY DON'T THEY JUST WORK
HARDER AND GO TO SCHOOL?**

**WHAT IF WE JUST SAID
“ALL LIVES MATTER?”**

**THEY CAN SING BUT THEY
CAN'T GET RID OF THEIR
POVERTY.**

**I AM NOT “BLACK”, I'M
HABESHA.**

If you are a part of the Habesha community,

you may have heard one of these statements (or something similar), said by friends, family members, or even yourself. I know I have.

Now, more than ever, it is important that we discuss what is happening politically and guide ourselves and our loved ones as best we can, to support change in this country. It's a difficult subject to talk about, but our lives and the lives of the black diaspora are at stake.

How you choose to have these conversations with your loved ones is up to you, as you know yourself and your people best. I did my best to make this as comprehensive as possible, and there are links embedded throughout the document with supporting information on these topics. Hopefully these resources can help guide you. I make no claims of being expert, or being perfect, but I do hope this can help start a much needed conversation.

Much love!

- David Samuel

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Let's Begin

Before we begin, remember to take stock of how you're feeling throughout this process. As you prepare yourself to have these conversations, be sure to breathe, check in with your mental and emotional health, and be ready to actively listen to what the people you're speaking with have to say.

Many of our family members, and especially our parents, are still carrying the trauma of the wars and the unrest they escaped to come to the United States. Some of them may be realizing what systemic racism is for the first time.

Empathize, and allow them to open up. You are guiding them to an understanding that will be uncomfortable to grasp, especially if this is their first time facing these thoughts and ideas.

Let's Begin : Questions

HOW HAS THE NEWS AFFECTED YOU?

**DO YOU KNOW WHY THEY'RE
PROTESTING?**

**WHAT HAVE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH
POLICE BEEN LIKE?**

**DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS
BLACK/AFRICAN-AMERICAN? WHY/
WHY NOT?**

**HAVE YOU PERSONALLY WITNESSED
OR EXPERIENCED RACISM IN AMERICA?**

Providing Context

After starting off with those questions, you may now be getting into a discussion around why folks are so angry.

Adding historical context to their understanding may take a little more time. Their information may only come from the news cycle, close friends, or their social media feed, and they may not have the tools to assess the information they receive from these sources.

This could be a time to discuss how racism and anti-blackness has affected your own life. You probably have personal experiences that could be illuminating. Let your family know what happened, how it affected you, and use the resources in this packet to reinforce the reality.

Remember to be patient and give them the space they need to process. And be patient with yourself. None of this is easy, but it is worth it.

Providing Context (Cont'd.)

THE OUTRAGE HAS BEEN SPARKED BECAUSE BLACK PEOPLE ARE BEING KILLED BY POLICE, BUT THE HISTORY OF OPPRESSION GOES BACK CENTURIES.

ON TOP OF THAT, COVID-19 HAS CREATED A GLOBAL PANDEMIC, AND IN THE UNITED STATES, BLACK PEOPLE ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO DIE FROM COVID-19 DUE TO A LACK OF ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE CARE IN AN ALREADY FLAWED HEALTHCARE SYSTEM.

COMMUNITIES HAVE TAKEN TO PROTESTING, NOT ONLY FOR THE LIVES LOST, BUT TO CHANGE A SYSTEM THAT HAS BEEN DESTROYING THEM FOR YEARS.

Explaining The System

You made it here? Great! Now you can start to pull out more historical details for context. Keep in mind, this doesn't need to all be one conversation, especially if it's with close family members that you talk to regularly. You can break this up into multiple conversations. You know your people best. Adjust as you need to.

We will discuss slavery, segregation, The Civil Rights Movement, police brutality, and how that history affects us today.

There is a lot to unpack here, and this guide is not meant to cover everything that has taken place within the centuries of racism and anti-blackness in the U.S., let alone the world.

At the end of this document there's a resource guide/book list to help continue the discussion and expand your understanding.

Keep being patient with yourself and with your family as you navigate this.

Slavery (1500s-1865)

THE FIRST AFRICANS IN THE AMERICAS WERE FORCIBLY BROUGHT TO THE NEW WORLD AS SLAVES IN THE 1500S.

FROM THE 1500S-1865, EUROPEANS TRAVELED TO VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WEST COAST OF AFRICA, AND FORCIBLY ENSLAVED OVER 12 MILLION AFRICANS AND PUT THEM IN THE UNDERBELLY OF CRAMPED SHIPS, NAKED AND STACKED ON TOP OF ONE ANOTHER. DUE TO THE INHUMANE CONDITIONS ON THE SHIP, OVER A THIRD OF THEM DIED.

THESE AFRICAN PEOPLE WERE BEATEN, RAPED, AND KILLED BY THE WHITE PEOPLE THAT ENSLAVED THEM. IF THEY WERE CAUGHT TRYING TO ESCAPE, THEY WERE TORTURED, BEATEN WITH WHIPS, BRANDED WITH HOT IRONS, OR HAD LIMBS AMPUTATED.

IN 1865, THE 13TH AMENDMENT WAS ADDED TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION, ABOLISHING SLAVERY.

THOUGH SLAVERY WAS ABOLISHED, BLACK AMERICANS WERE LARGEMLY DEPRIVED OF CIVIL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND THERE WERE FEW AVENUES FOR BLACKS TO BUILD PROSPEROUS LIVES AS FREE MEN AND WOMEN.

IT WOULD BE ALMOST 100 YEARS BEFORE THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT WAS PASSED...

Post-Slavery, Pre-Civil Rights (1865-1954)

IN THE 100 YEARS BETWEEN ABOLITION AND THE PASSGE OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT, BLACK AMERICANS ENDURED SECOND CLASS CITIZENSHIP AND RETRENCHMENT OF THE NOTIONS WHICH MADE RACE-BASED SLAVERY POSSIBLE IN THE U.S.

IN 1865, THE YEAR SLAVERY WAS ABOLISHED, THE KU KLUX KLAN, WHOSE MAIN GOAL WAS TO RESTORE WHITE SUPREMACY OVER BLACK PEOPLE, WAS FORMED. THE GROUP'S MANY CHAPTERS WOULD TERRORIZE AND RAID BLACK COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE U.S.,

FROM 1890-1908, THE U.S. ENACTED HARSH "JIM CROW" LAWS THAT SEGREGATED BLACKS, DENIED THEM EMPLOYMENT, AND LEGALIZED MOB VIOLENCE.

WHITE PEOPLE WOULD EVEN SELL POSTCARDS WITH IMAGES OF LYNCHED BLACK BODIES AS SOUVENIRS.

IN SPITE OF THIS, BLACK AMERICANS CONTINUED TO PERSEVERE, AND BY 1900, TWO-THIRDS OF THE LANDOWNERS IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA WERE BLACK FARMERS.

DURING THIS PERIOD, OVER 30,000 BLACK TEACHERS WERE TRAINED, HELPING OVER HALF THE BLACK POPULATION ACHIEVE LITERACY.

Post-Slavery, Pre-Civil Rights (1865-1954)

IN 1914, WORLD WAR I BEGAN. OVER 370,000 BLACK AMERICANS ENLISTED, FIGHTING FOR A COUNTRY THAT DID NOT GRANT THEM EQUAL RIGHTS.

THAT SAME YEAR, 10,000 BLACK AMERICANS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS ORGANIZED A SILENT MARCH IN NEW YORK CITY TO PROTEST THE CONTINUED LYNCHINGS, RIOTS, AND LACK OF CIVIL RIGHTS.

BY 1920, BLACK AMERICANS MADE UP ALMOST 10% OF THE U.S. POPULATION AND WERE CREATING BUSINESSES, ESTABLISHING UNIVERSITIES, AND FIGHTING FOR CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION.

THE 1920S BROUGHT IN THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE, A LITERARY AND CULTURAL AWAKENING FOR BLACK PEOPLE.

EVEN THOUGH BLACK PEOPLE WERE MAKING ADVANCEMENTS, THEY WERE STILL NOT TRULY FREE FROM OPPRESSION.

IN 1921, THE TULSA MASSACRE DEVASTATED A THRIVING BUSINESS DISTRICT KNOWN AS BLACK WALL STREET, LEAVING 300 DEAD, 8000 HOMELESS.

Post-Slavery, Pre-Civil Rights (1865-1954)

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE CANNOT BE OVERSTATED. BLACK AMERICANS WERE CULTIVATING THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVES THROUGH DRAMA, MUSIC, AND LITERATURE, CRAFTING A FUTURE IN WHICH THEY COULD EXIST FREELY.

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE HELPED BLACK AMERICANS TO SEE THEMSELVES AS PART OF THE DIASPORA.

IN 1935, MELAKU E. BAYEN, AN ETHIOPIAN, AND COLONEL JOHN ROBINSON, A BLACK AMERICAN, WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN REAWAKENING THE TIES BETWEEN THE AFRICAN DIASPORA AND ETHIOPIA, FURTHERING THE PAN-AFRICAN MOVEMENT AND THE FIGHT AGAINST COLONIALISM.

WHEN ITALY INVADED ETHIOPIA IN 1935, 20,000 PROTESTORS, BOTH BLACK AND WHITE, GATHERED IN HARLEM. 10,000 PROTESTORS GATHERED IN CHICAGO AND WERE MET WITH POLICE VIOLENCE.

THOUGH THEY WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION, THOUSANDS SIGNED UP TO FIGHT IN ETHIOPIA, BUT WERE STOPPED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.

The Civil Right Movement (1955-1968)

AS BLACK PEOPLE CONTINUED TO ADVANCE, WINNING AWARDS, DESEGREGATING SPORTS, AND FIGHTING IN WORLD WAR II, THE FIGHT AT HOME WAS JUST BEGINNING.

IN 1955, A CHAIN OF EVENTS HELPED SET OFF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

THURGOOD MARSHALL WON BROWN VS. THE BOARD OF ED., DESEGREGATING SCHOOLS IN THE U.S.

EMMETT TILL WAS MURDERED BY A GANG OF WHITE MEN FOR “OFFENDING” A WHITE WOMAN. HIS STORY GAINED INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION WHEN IMAGES OF HIS OPEN CASKET CASKET WERE PUBLISHED. IN 2017, IT WAS LATER REVEALED THE WOMAN INVOLVED FALSELY ACCUSED EMMETT TILL.

ROSA PARKS REFUSED TO GIVE UP HER SEAT TO A WHITE MAN ON A PUBLIC BUS AND WAS ARRESTED.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT GAVE RISE TO MALCOLM X, MARTIN LUTHER KING, & THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY. THEY ORGANIZED THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN THE FIGHT FOR THE FREEDOM AND SELF-DETERMINATION OF BLACK PEOPLE.

BLACK AMERICANS ORGANIZED THEIR EFFORTS.

THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT = 382 DAYS.

GREENSBORO SIT-INS = 6 MONTHS

THE FREEDOM RIDES = 7 MONTHS.

THE BIRMINGHAM CAMPAIGN = 37 DAYS.

REMEMBER



SLAVERY WAS ABOLISHED IN 1865.

BLACK AMERICANS WERE SUBJECT TO JIM CROW LAWS FOR 100 YEARS.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT WAS NOT PASSED UNTIL 1964.

EVEN THOUGH THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT WAS PASSED, BLACK AMERICANS STILL FACED OPPRESSION. PATTERNS OF AMERICAN POLICY FROM HOUSING TO EDUCATION, TAXATION TO VOTING ENABLED THE OPPRESSION AND SUPPRESSION OF BLACK PEOPLE.

AMERICAN SOCIETY CONTINUES TO USE THESE POLICIES TO OPPRESS BLACK PEOPLE TO THIS DAY.

**OUR ABILITY TO COME TO AMERICA IS OWED DIRECTLY TO THEIR SACRIFICES.
THERE IS NO AMERICA WITHOUT THEM.**

Police Brutality & #BLM

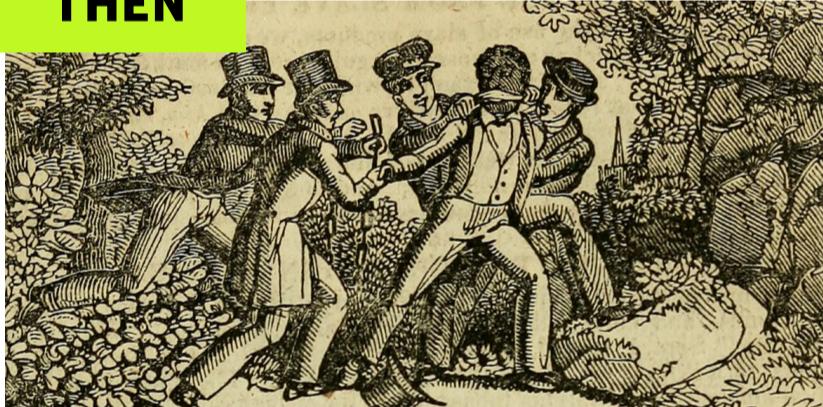
**POLICE BRUTALITY DID NOT JUST START WITH GEORGE FLOYD,
BREONNA TAYLOR, OR AHMAUD ARBERY.**

THE POLICE BRUTALITY THAT WE SEE TODAY ORIGINATES FROM THE PRACTICES OF SLAVE DRIVERS, SLAVE CATCHERS, AND LYNCH MOBS IN THE U.S., STARTING IN THE 17TH CENTURY.

THE RACIST IDEOLOGIES THAT FOUNDED POLICING CONTINUE TO AFFECT BLACK PEOPLE TO THIS DAY.

THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT FOCUSES ON MORE THAN JUST POLICE BRUTALITY. THE MOVEMENT ALSO ADDRESSES THE IMPACTS OF RACIALLY-BIASED POLICY, AND IMPLICIT BIAS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT WHICH HAVE HAD DISASTROUS EFFECTS ON THE BLACK POPULATION'S FAMILY STRUCTURE, COMMUNITY STABILITY, AND EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH OUTCOMES.

THEN



NOW



A free black man is captured to be taken back to slavery.

A black woman is arrested while peacefully protesting the death of Alton Sterling in 2016.

1-IN-1000

BLACK BOYS AND MEN WILL BE KILLED BY POLICE IN THEIR LIFETIME

Anti-Racism

At this point, take a break if you need to. This is a lot to take in, and you may need time to process. The final thing to remember is that we must continue to move forward and couple our knowledge with action. That is where anti-racism comes in.

"ANTI-RACISM IS THE ACTIVE PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING AND ELIMINATING RACISM BY CHANGING SYSTEMS, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES, POLICIES AND PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES, SO THAT POWER IS REDISTRIBUTED AND SHARED EQUITABLY."

NAC INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES: WOMEN AND GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO NOT BE RACIST. YOU MUST BE ACTIVELY FIGHTING AGAINST THE SYSTEM OF RACISM THAT CRUSHES THE SOULS AND BODIES OF BLACK PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD DAILY.

In Closing

Take a moment to revisit those questions from the first section (Let's Begin) with your family. Here are some follow-up questions you can ask them:

Have your answers from the first section changed? How so?

Have you come to a new understanding about The Black Lives Matter Movement? What do you know that you didn't know before? What other questions do you have?

How are your experiences as a black person in this country similar/different than blacks whose ancestors were forced into slavery?

How has black activism in the U.S. made life here easier for you and your family?

Use the resources at the end of this packet to continue the conversation and explore the topics that have been raised in your discussion.

20 **AS IMMIGRANTS AND DESCENDANTS OF RECENT IMMIGRANTS, WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE HARD WORK OF BLACK AMERICANS HAS ENABLED BLACK AND BROWN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES TO LIVE AND WORK IN THE UNITED STATES.**

WHATEVER PREJUDICE OR HATE WE MAY HAVE FACED FOR BEING ETHIOPIAN/ERITREAN FROM BLACK AMERICANS DOES NOT ABSOLVE US FROM DISMANTLING THE SYSTEM OF OPPRESSION THAT HOLDS US DOWN COLLECTIVELY.

WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE SYSTEM OF OPPRESSION DOES NOT SEE US AS ERITREAN, ETHIOPIAN, HABESHA, OR EVEN AMERICAN.

WE ARE BLACK.

OUR ETHNICITY DOES NOT MATTER TO OUR OPPRESSORS.

**THEY WILL CONTINUE TO KILL US
AND DISCRIMINATE AGAINST US IN SPITE OF IT.**

Resources

EVERYTHING IN GREEN IS A CLICKABLE LINK!

BOOKS

[**A BLACK WOMEN'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES**](#)
[**THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X**](#)
[**ELOQUENT RAGE BY BRITTANY C. COOPER**](#)
[**THE BODY KEEPS SCORE BY BESSEL VAN DER KOLK, M.D.**](#)
[**DARING GREATLY BY BRENE BROWN**](#)
[**THE COLOR OF LAW BY RICHARD ROTHSTEIN**](#)
[**THE NEW JIM CROW BY MICHELLE ALEXANDER**](#)
[**BLACK ETHIOPIA BY BELETE BELACHEW YIHUN**](#)
[**BLACK MEN AND DEPRESSION BY JOHN HEAD**](#)
[**WHITE FRAGILITY BY ROBIN DIANGELO**](#)

LINKS

[**MOVEMENT 4 BLACK LIVES**](#)
[**POLICE VIOLENCE**](#)
[**BLACK LIVES MATTER**](#)
[**SLAVERY**](#)
[**COVID-19**](#)
[**PROPERTY TAX**](#)
[**VOTER RESTRICTION**](#)
[**NAT'L RESOURCE LIST**](#)

[**THE WEALTH GAP**](#)
[**THE TULSA RACE MASSACRE**](#)
[**WHO KILLED MALCOLM X?**](#)
[**GERRYMANDERING**](#)
[**JIM CROW LAWS**](#)
[**12 MOVIES ON RACE**](#)
[**DEFUND THE POLICE**](#)
[**ANTI-RACISM**](#)

WAYS TO HELP

[**JOIN AN ORGANIZED PROTEST**](#)
[**SHARE FACT-CHECKED INFORMATION ONLINE**](#)
[**EDUCATE OTHER HABESHAS**](#)
[**DONATE RESOURCES TO A LOCAL ORGANIZATION**](#)