

# Prayers from Chautauqua's Interfaith Family

## No. 15 • *From the Jewish Tradition*

O God, our Ultimate Source of Healing and Strength, we need Your support now more than ever before. We are living in toxic times. In our nation, extremism once lingered at the margins of society. Now it has commanded an acceptable place in the very center.

O God, we must confess that we deceive ourselves by believing that we are free of such racism and prejudice, that we don't harbor these ugly sentiments, especially of those whose skin color differs from our own. Yet our souls are stained.

Help us to confront our deception, O God. Though we may not have consciously mistreated our African-American brothers and sisters, we have silently stood by and ignored their plight.

We have not raised our voices in protest as security guards trail them in stores like criminals, as neighbors stare suspiciously at them as they walk or ride their bicycles in their neighborhoods, as police officers falsely accuse them of traffic violations, as bank officials refuse them loans, and as landlords rent them unsafe houses ridden with disease.

Teach us to remember the ancient religious legend that You, O God, took dust of different colors from the four corners of the earth to create Adam and then implanted in him a soul, which is Your Divine image. You did so to remind us that all of us are descended from the same multi-racial human being, and thus we are equally sacred in Your eyes.

Stir us to heed the challenge of the prophet Malachi: "Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then do we deal treacherously one against the other?" ... (2:10)

Fill us with zeal to eradicate our nation's original sin of systematic racism and to heal our nation by upholding the dignity and humanity of each of its citizens.  
Amen.

—**Rabbi Samuel M. Stahl**

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