

2. Speak Out

What is God looking for from us? Dr. Avivah Zornberg teaches that the book of *Bamidbar*, Numbers, is all about the search for proper *dibur*, speech. Through forty years in the desert, God endures the ex-slaves' complaints, rebellions, and regrets about leaving Egypt. Finally, at the book's end, Tzlofchad's five daughters—Machlah, Noa, Choglah, Milkah and Tirtzah—come to Moses with a different kind of question (Num. 27:1). Their father had died in the desert with no son. Under the existing laws, his portion in the land of Israel would go to distant relatives. Could they not inherit instead? God says four words to Moses:

Ken b'not Tzlofchad dovrovot.

כֵּן בְּנוֹת צְלֹפְחָד דְּבָרֹת

Tzlofchad's daughters speak right.

For Zornberg, these words relieve the tension of the entire desert journey. All God was looking for was someone to speak up—*ledaber*—for justice, even in their own interest. May our speech-acts merit the same simple, beautiful response: *ken*. Yes.

3. Team Up

Regarding how the story of Rosa Parks is told, educator Herbert Kohl writes,

When the story of the Montgomery bus boycott is told merely as a tale of a single heroic person, it leaves children hanging. Not everyone is a hero or heroine...Not every child can be a Rosa Parks, but everyone can imagine herself or himself as a participant in the boycott. As a tale of a social movement and a community effort to overthrow injustice, the Rosa Parks story opens the possibility of every child identifying herself or himself as an activist, as someone who can help make justice happen.

- "The Politics of Children's Literature: What's Wrong with the Rosa Parks Myth,"
by Herbert Kohl. Rethinking Our Classrooms Volume 1:
<http://zinnedproject.wpenet.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/19politics-of-childrens-lit.pdf>

Here's how you can start....

נִרְצָה
Nirtzah

**As we close our seder, we commit to action.
What do we take away from this experience?
What concrete steps can we take?**

1. Be Hopeful

While the task is large, Kevin Bales is optimistic:

It can happen. Five thousand years of slavery can end forever. Two hundred years of pretending we don't have slaves anymore can end forever...Yes, \$13 billion a year in slave-made products and services is a lot of money, but it is exactly what Americans spent on Valentine's Day in 2005...No industry or corporation, no political party, no state or country or culture is dependent on slavery...Never has the world been so rich, never have travel and communication been so easy, never have so many countries been ready to work together, never has the world had the end of slavery so easily within its grasp.

- *Ending Slavery*, 2007, p. 3-4

- **Learn about the supply chain.** Since 2012, the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act has required most large companies to post their anti-slavery policies on their websites. www.knowthechain.org has a database of over 5,000 companies' statements. Shop at and invest in businesses with clear guidelines backed by third-party, ongoing, on-the-ground monitoring.

- **Memorize the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline: 1-888-3737-8888.** Call 24/7 to get information or references, or if you suspect you've discovered a case of modern slavery. Polaris, which runs the Hotline, also has excellent resources explaining the various forms of trafficking we see in the United States and how we can make a difference.

- **Buy Fair Trade products** where they're available. This commonly includes chocolate, coffee, and tea. Keep in mind that organic and Fair Trade are not the same, though organic farms may be healthier environments for farmworkers. Child slavery is an issue in the cocoa supply chain. So that we can celebrate Passover in sweetness, and without the bitterness of slavery, Fair Trade Judaica and T'ruah offer Fair Trade, kosher for Passover chocolate through a partnership with Equal Exchange: <http://shop.equalexchange.coop/pesach>

- **Follow anti-trafficking organizations through social media.** Here are some suggestions: @FreedomNetUSA, @GlbFreedomCtr, @CIW, @Truahrabbis, @DamayanMigrants, @Polaris_Project, @ATEST, @freetheslaves, @Allianceforfairfood.

Ways to Take Action

- **Take action!** You can receive action alerts about fighting modern day slavery, together with other human rights issues, by signing onto T'ruah's mailing list at www.truah.org

- **Support the National Survivors Network**, in which survivors have banded together to advocate for the policies they believe will be effective. NSN has survivors who speak publicly; be prepared to pay an honorarium as you would for any other guest speaker.

- **Advocate for more dedicated shelter beds.** Many homeless shelters won't take trafficking survivors, who understandably have different needs than other homeless people. More funding for ongoing services for survivors has been identified as a core need by every anti-trafficking organization with which T'ruah has worked.

- **Meet with your member of Congress.** Even if there is not pending legislation, letting Congress know you care about modern slavery makes a difference when laws are introduced. Fighting slavery is a bi-partisan issue. Together with National Council of Jewish Women, T'ruah coordinates JCAT: The Jewish Coalition Against Trafficking, a coalition of national Jewish organizations that advocates for anti-trafficking legislation.

- **Donate** to organizations that are part of Freedom Network or ATEST, the Alliance To End Slavery and Trafficking. The Beyond Survival Fund (bit.ly/bscfund) provides emergency support to trafficking survivors, bridging the gap until they can receive government benefits.

To get involved with ending and preventing sex trafficking²:

- Between 2010-2014, 18 states passed laws that allow the vacating of convictions for trafficking victims, which means crimes—including prostitution—committed under duress can be expunged. If your state is not one of the 18, advocate for passage of a similar law. Polaris Project has more information: <http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/assisting-victims/vacating-convictions>
- Support organizations that work directly with LGBT youth. This population is especially vulnerable to being trafficked; more than 30% of trafficked people whom the Urban Justice Center's Sex Workers Project encounters experienced LGBT discrimination in their families.
- Support shelter beds for homeless youth and other direct services for teenagers at risk.
- Make sure that campaigns you join on sex trafficking are led by survivors of trafficking, anti-trafficking experts, and law enforcement. Be cautious about efforts that unintentionally target all people in sex work, not just those who are exploited.
- Join the listserv of the Urban Justice Center's Sex Workers Project. They send out targeted requests when they have concluded a case and are ready to help a trafficked person reunite with her/his children, a process that requires money and other support. Visit www.sexworkersproject.org.
- Join NCJW's campaign against trafficking, called Exodus: <http://www.ncjw.org/trafficking>

There are many other ways to get involved. For more suggestions, visit: <http://www.truah.org/slaveryhandbook>

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם!

**Next year in Jerusalem—in a renewed world
where all are free.**

¹ Human trafficking has been found in nearly every industry in America, so the following three fields are singled out only as examples. Domestic work and agricultural work represent two particularly hard-hit fields because they are not covered by the National Labor Relations Act. Sex trafficking has touched a particular nerve in the American Jewish community because of the historic connection to the trafficking of Jewish women in the early 1900s.

² For more information on sex trafficking, see p 14 of *Fighting Modern-Day Slavery: A Handbook for Jewish Communities*, produced by T'ruah and available at <http://www.truah.org/slaveryhandbook>

To get involved with ending and preventing the trafficking of farmworkers¹:

- Join the CIW Campaign for Fair Food, currently focused on urging Wendy's and Publix to join the Fair Food Program. You can organize a protest, deliver a letter to a store manager, attend an event, and more. Find information at:
 - <http://www.truah.org/tomatorabbis>
 - <http://www.allianceforfairfood.org/take-action>
 - <http://www.ciw-online.org>.

To get involved with ending and preventing the trafficking of domestic workers:

- Read the report *Beyond Survival* published in January, 2015 by the National Domestic Workers Alliance, at <http://www.domesticworkers.org/beyondbeyondsurvival>. It gives a comprehensive look at forced labor and domestic workers (including root causes and recommendations for concrete change). Share it with friends and reflect on it together. NDWA is interested in your feedback; email Tiffany Williams, tiffany@domesticworkers.org.
- Share the report with your representatives in Congress or state government.
- Connect with NDWA through www.domesticworkers.org and/or social media. Find an affiliated worker rights or anti-trafficking organization near you and see what specific help they need.

The young woman with the angelic face glanced at me briefly, then studied the worn industrial carpet that stretched between us. "He said that he loved me and wanted to present me to his parents for their blessing. Instead, he locked me in a room, forced himself on me, and sold my body to other men. If I came with him to America, he promised that I could get a real job instead of prostitution, and we would save money to build a home and raise a family. It was all a lie."

The words were spoken in Spanish, but they could just as easily been Yiddish. In the late 19th-early 20th century, countless Eastern European Jewish girls and women were sold into brothels in the Americas through the identical ruse—false promises of love, marriage, and a better life. We were slaves in Egypt, but we were also slaves in Odessa, New York, and Buenos Aires.

When I listen to my clients' accounts of suffering, I also hear the echoes of my foremothers' cries of distress, strengthening my resolve to help these vulnerable individuals regain their dignity and their freedom.

- Lori L. Cohen, Director,
Anti-Trafficking Initiative,
Sanctuary for Families, Inc.