

I wish my Jewish community would join the Black Lives Matters movement. Because at its core, Black Lives Matter represents the fight for equality, justice, and for minority lives being seen as having value. And yes, it is true that the recent BLM platform aligns itself with BDS, but here's the thing: disagreement about Israel should not be powerful enough to shut down all other non-related conversations. The relationship to Israel--whether pro or anti-Zionist---is only a part of one's Jewish identity, not its entirety. Likewise, BLM's BDS-sympathetic stance is only a part of its platform. And a minute one at that.

If the BLM stance on Israel is incongruent with your own, then there is literally the other 98.7% of BLM's platform you can choose to stand behind, the same way you pick and choose what to align with and what not to align with in familial relationships, politics, and yes, even Judaism. If your moral compass and fidelity to ideological purity compels you to walk away from supporting BLM, then let me give you some insight into my own experience:

Every week, I show up to any given synagogue and have to encounter/battle at least one person who doesn't think I'm the right color to belong there. I frequently study Mishneh Torah, a superb tome of halachic literature written by Maimonides, the same Maimonides who also wrote in Guide to the Perplexed that black people are "incapable of attaining to supreme religious values" and that their place in nature is "below that of a man and above that of a monkey". In addition to being African American, I proudly declare myself a Jew, an Orthodox one at that, despite the fact that New York rabbi Morris J. Raphall soundly endorsed slavery's legitimacy during the peak of the secession crisis. If I am capable of showing up for and on the side of Judaism--and am expected to, no less--despite centuries worth of egregious wrongs espoused and the support of genocidal institutions against my racial personhood, then the Jewish community can likewise show support and be present for BLM."