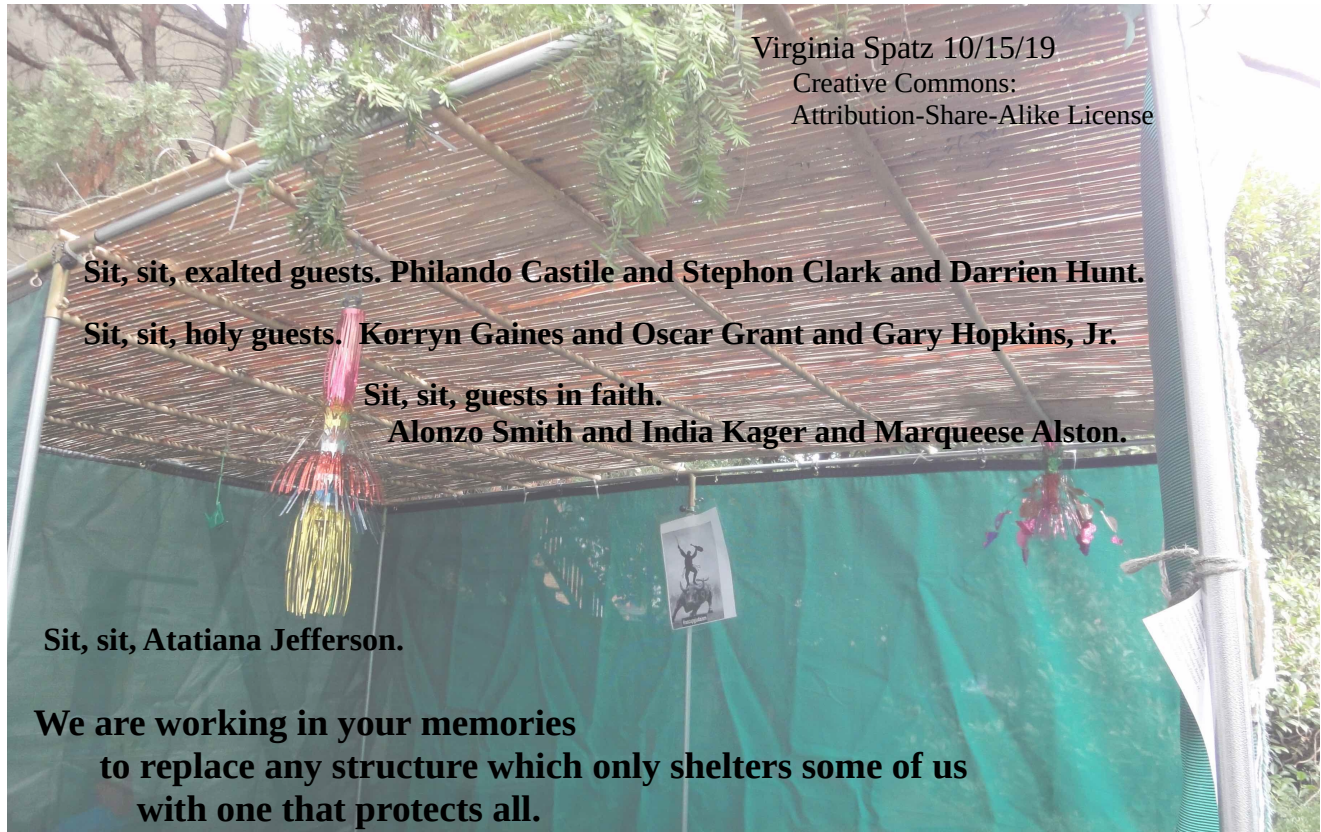


Meditation for Sitting in the Sukkah, 5780 (2019)



NOTES: The three "Sit, sit..." formulations are part of a traditional meditation upon entering a sukkah, inviting *Ushpizin* ["guests"]. Visit My Jewish Learning for more on inviting symbolic guests -- <http://bit.ly/MJLushpizin>

Philando Divall Castile (7/16/83 –7/6/16). 36-year-old Black school nutrition supervisor. Shot to death, in front of girlfriend and child, while attempting to show police officer concealed carry permit.

Stephon Clark (8/10/95 – 3/18/18). 22-year-old Black man shot to death by police officer, while carrying a cellphone through grandmother's backyard.

Darrien Hunt (d. 2014). 22-year-old Black man, cos-playing with fake samurai sword, shot to death by police.

Korryn Gaines (d.2016). 23-year-old Black woman shot to death after standoff with police when they tried to serve a warrant. 5-year-old son also shot but survived.

Oscar Juliuss Grant III (2/27/86-1/1/09). 22-year-old Black man shot to death by transit police on BART subway platform, New Year's Day. (See film, *Fruitvale Station*)

Gary Hopkins, Jr. (d. 11/27/99). 19-year-old Black man, helping to end a fight, shot to death by PG County police. Marion Hopkins-Gray, Coalition of Concerned Mothers, active locally and nationally, plans **"IT TAKES A VILLAGE"** – A CELEBRATION OF GARY HOPKINS, JR.'S LIFE <http://bit.ly/ITAVhopkins>

Alonzo Smith, (d. 11/1/15). 27-year-old Black man, killed by "Special Police" using prohibited chest compression, in Ward 8. Beverly Smith, also Coalition of Concerned Mothers, **plans a memorial** event this year.

India Kager (d. 2016). 27-year-old Black woman killed, along with boyfriend (four-month-old son survived), by Virginia Beach SWAT team who fired 30 shots into the car which they had been following for several hours.

Marquese Alston (d. June 12, 2018). 22-year-old Black man shot by police in Ward 8. **Family still awaits info.**

Atatiana Jefferson (d. 10/12/19).

28-year-old Black woman, killed by a police officer, who shot through the window of her home, where she'd recently moved to help care for her mother and was caring for (and playing a game with) her nephew.

Vigils and other actions on-going.

A Meditation for Shaking the Lulav, 5780 (2019)

Begin with the citron [etrog], its flower-producing *pittom* pointing downward:

Consider the many lives prevented from flowering -- over the centuries on land that has become the United States and the State of Israel, and in other places around the globe -- due to structural racism.

Some of us have direct or familial experience of such racism. Some of us share experiences with, or learn from, neighbors. For some of us, our understanding is more distant or abstract. All of us can use this position of the etrog, symbol of our “heart,” our source of connection, to meditate for a few moments on the losses of this stifling position.



Aware now of the palm branch [lulav], we awaken our “spines,” our central strength; we ponder the branch's flexibility and notice its limits. How can we ensure that everyone has space and safety to reach to the best of their ability without facing crushing forces?

Aware of the myrtle [hadass], we awaken our “eyes,” our ability to receive through whichever channels are available to us; we acknowledge our responsibility to remain open to others’ thoughts and experiences. Multiple “eyes” remind us to seek varieties of perspective and to consider where our bundle may be incomplete.

Aware of the willow [aravah], we awaken our “mouths,” our ability to communicate by voice, hands, text or other means; we acknowledge the power of our communications, reminding ourselves of the responsibility to examine our communications for participation in structural racism, considering healing that might be in order, and recommitting to using our “mouths” toward positive change.

Aware, again, of the etrog, perhaps newly sensitized to our inter-dependence and the power in our hands, we recite the blessing for “elevating” the four species we hold.

We turn the etrog right-side-up with a prayer for so many who have been held back from full flowering.

Extend awareness by waving or shaking the produce in each direction – front, right, back, left, up and down – out and in, three times. With each set of shakes, concentrate on

- gratitude to YHVH, That On Which All Depends,
- gathering strength from The Source of All, and
- calling on The Saving Power to unite us for the common good at this shakiest of seasons.