

Chocolate Moses Salon: Participant's Guide

Part I: Introduction

Welcome to the Chocolate Moses Salon and thank you for speaking up and taking action to end modern slavery and human trafficking! During this salon, you will:

- Learn about modern slavery and human trafficking
- Gain a Jewish perspective on the issue
- Ask and answer questions related to the issue and about Jewish responsibility
- Explore ways to take action

The content of the material is best read aloud by salon participants and there should be plenty of room for questions and reflections. The more participation, the better the salon. This material makes no assumptions regarding Jewish knowledge or beliefs. All that is required from you is passion, an opinion, and a willingness to be a part of the conversation.

Here are a few ground rules to help make this a positive and productive evening:

- Please put your phones away and turn off ringers if you can.
- Confidentiality is key; our conversations tonight remain in this room.
- Speak in the first-person, making “I” statements based on experience and personal truths.
- Assume the best about each other and what is shared.
- No interrupting. Let people speak.
- No giving advice.
- Allow for silence.

Part II: Modern Slavery and Jewish Responsibility

The following excerpt appeared in January 18, 2008 edition of the Ft. Myers News-Press:

In one of the largest slavery prosecutions Southwest Florida has ever seen, authorities arrested a sixth suspect Wednesday, charging her with making money off unpaid illegal immigrant farm workers.

“Slavery, plain and simple,” said Chief Assistant U.S. Attorney Doug Molloy.

For two years, federal prosecutors claim, (the defendants) held more than a dozen people as slaves on their property. They made them sleep in box trucks and shacks, charged them for food and showers, didn't pay them for picking produce and beat them if they tried to leave.

“In the past 10 years, prosecutors have handled several slavery cases, but none as large as this. According to the federal indictment, the defendants threatened the immigrants, held their identification documents, created debit accounts they couldn't repay and hooked them on alcohol and drugs to keep them working. The documents list 13 instances when the workers were beaten. ‘Some of the folks have been there for years,’ Molloy said. ‘It is their hope to send back money to their families, and they hang on to that hope. It's just a situation that's difficult to get out of. Sadly, this is the worst of what happens when you have across-the-board degradation of labor and conditions that allow slavery to take root and flourish,’ said Laura Germino of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, which has helped prosecute six slavery cases that freed more than 1,000 workers in the past decade.”

(The main defendants in this case, Cesar and Geovanni Navarrete, were subsequently convicted and sentenced to 12 years in prison.)

FACT: According to the International Labour Organization's 2012 global estimate of forced labor, there are 20.9 million slaves in the world today.

A slave...

- 1) Cannot express free will
- 2) Is controlled through a combination of violence, threats and manipulation
- 3) Suffers extreme economic exploitation at the hands of slaveholders
- 4) Receives no payment for their work other than basic sustenance.

*Human trafficking is a form of modern slavery involving recruiting, harboring, transporting, supplying or obtaining a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of involuntary servitude or slavery.

From the Tradition:**יִבְאוּ אֶל נֹחַ אֶל הַתֵּבָה וַיִּסְגֶּר יְהוָה בַּעֲדוֹ**

"And they went unto Noah into the ark...and Adonai shut him in."

– Genesis 7:15-16

According to the French-Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, God had to close the door for Noah because it would have been impossible for Noah to shut the door and remain safe while all the other people were doomed to die. "A human being does not retreat into himself. Man's humanity is a responsibility for the other," said Levinas. Our humanity depends on being responsible for, and reaching out to, the other.

For Reflection:

- In the article above, what were the ways the situation in Southwest Florida fulfilled the definition of slavery?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be responsible for others?
- How are we responsible for what happened in Southwest Florida?

Take Action!

Write a paragraph exploring the boundaries of your responsibility. Do you prioritize Jewish or universal responsibility? Is your focus local, national or global? Why?

Part III: The Work of Slaves, Who Were Created in the Image of God

Gayan, a 15-year-old boy, was a school dropout who was recruited by a broker promising him a good job in the Jharsuguda district (in India). Instead, Gayan, along with other boys, was confined to a factory to work, given little food, severely beaten, branded, burned with cigarettes, and allowed only a few hours' sleep each night.^[1]

Saeeda, a deaf Pakistani woman, was ten years old when she left Pakistan for Manchester, England for a job as a domestic worker. For nearly a decade, she was abused, raped and beaten by her employers, a Pakistani couple. Now in her twenties, Saeeda told the courts that she was confined to a cellar and forced to work as a slave.^[2]

FACT: Modern slaves are primarily in these four areas:

- 1) Forced labor in agricultural and industrial settings
- 2) Bonded labor

- 3) Involuntary domestic servitude
- 4) Sex trafficking and forced prostitution

FACT: The 2012 U.S. Department of Labor's List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor states that child and forced labor exists in 74 countries. This number does not include countries, including the United States, where women are forced into sexual servitude.

From the Tradition:

ויברא אלהים את האדם בצלמו בצלם אלהים ברא אתו
זכר ונקבה ברא אתם

"And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

-Genesis 1:27

Gayan and Saeeda were both created in the image of God. Those who enslaved them were, too.

According to Levinas, *B'tzelem Elohim* does not mean we live in a world where we are all fundamentally the same. When we look at another person, we do not see a reflection of ourselves or the image of God, but only a "trace of the Infinite." In that trace is a sign of God Who imposes responsibility for the other onto us. And in acting on this responsibility, we fulfill our responsibility to God and honor our Covenant.

For Reflection:

- Does Levinas' reading of "*B'tzelem Elohim*" change your understanding of the verse?
- Does his interpretation change your relationship to Gayan and Saeeda or how you might respond?
- How do you reconcile the enslaved, the enslavers, and "in the image of God?"

Take Action!

Visit Slavery Footprint (www.slaveryfootprint.org). Take the survey to find out how many slaves work for you.

Part IV: Know the Price of Slavery, Because We Were Once Slaves

“Migrant workers from Nepal and other countries are like cattle in Kuwait. Actually, cattle are probably more expensive than migrant workers there. No one cares whether we die or are killed. Our lives have no value.”

-Nepalese man trafficked to Kuwait, during interview with Amnesty International^[3]

Consider this: In the 1800s typical Southern agricultural slave was an investment, selling for \$1,000 to \$1,800 (around \$50,000 to \$100,000 in today's money). Slaveholders had to balance the violent control they inflicted on their slaves against the risk of an injury and lost profits.

Today, a slave can be bought for a few hundred dollars or less. To their owners, they are disposable.

FACT: Over the course of servitude, a slave earns \$8,700 in Brazil and \$2,000 in India for the slaveholder. A sex slave in Thailand earns \$18,000 for the slaveholder and earns \$49,000 in Los Angeles.^[4]

FACT: According to International Labour Organization estimates, slaves generate at least \$32 billion annually while victims of slavery lose at least \$21 billion each year in unpaid wages and illegal fees for recruitment.

From the Tradition:

ואמרת לבנך עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים ויוציאנו
יהוה ממצרים ביד חזקה

“We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and with a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.”

-Deuteronomy 6:21

“Even if we do not know the particular experience...we do carry with us the collective memory of being alienated and mistreated.”

-Professor Alyssa Gray, HUC-JIR^[5]

In addition to reminding us of our history of enslavement, the Torah also:

- Forbids us from oppressing others (Leviticus 19:13, Deuteronomy 24:15)
- Commands us to uphold the stranger's rights (Exodus 23:9)
- Instruct us to befriend the stranger (Deuteronomy 10:19)

For Reflection:

- Does knowing the price of modern slavery make your relationship to it more tangible?
- Does our collective historical memory of enslavement in Egypt influence your connection to modern slavery? How?

Take Action!

You can help end slavery by writing to the President, your Senators and Representatives. As one of their constituents, let them know this is important to you and ask them to take action against slavery.

To email President Barack Obama, U.S. Senators, and U.S. Representatives visit:
<http://www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml>

Part V: Spotting the Signs of Slavery and Redeeming Captives

FACT: The U.S. government estimates that 14,500 to 17,500 people are brought into the U.S. annually to be used as slaves.

"I urge all Americans to educate themselves about all forms of modern slavery and the signs and consequences of human trafficking. Together, and in cooperation with our partners around the world, we can work to end this terrible injustice and protect the rights to life and liberty entrusted to us by our forebears and owed to our children."

-U.S. President Barack Obama^[6]

Questions to Consider in Potential Situations of Slavery:

- Does this person enjoy freedom of movement?
- Does this person appear to be held against his will?
- Is this person followed or under the supervision of someone else?
- Does this person seem nervous or afraid to speak freely?
- Is this person free to change employers?
- If this person appears to be of school age, are they working when they should be in school?
- Does this person control his earnings?
- Was this person cheated into payment of debt upon arrival in the U.S.?
- Has this person had his passport or other documents taken away?

- Does this person seem injured? Are signs of physical injury apparent?
- Does this person seem confused, undernourished or afraid?
- Does he seem disoriented, confused, malnourished or frightened? [\[7\]](#)

From the Tradition:

The commandment of *Pidyon Shvuyim* (redeeming captives) obliges Jews to redeem other Jews who have been taken captive. Chocolate Moses universalizes this duty and extends our Jewish responsibility to everyone in need.

If we ignore our duty to liberate the enslaved, we violate the commandments to:

- Open our hands to the poor (Deuteronomy 15:7, 11)
- Let our brothers and sisters live by our side (Leviticus 25:36)
- Love our neighbors as ourselves (Leviticus 19:18)

The 12th century Jewish sage Maimonides considered *Pidyon Shvuyim* among the most important of the commandments, placing it ahead of feeding the hungry or clothing the poor.

For Reflection:

- Why would Maimonides place a greater priority on redeeming captives than on feeding the hungry or clothing the poor?
- If you thought someone was enslaved, what might keep you from action?

Take Action!

If you believe you have seen or know someone who is enslaved, your best first step is to call:

- 911 to alert your local law enforcement agency or
- 888-373-7888 for The National Human Trafficking Resource Center information hotline

Part VI: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Free Will of the Worker

At a carpet factory in Nepal, Nayantara met a labor broker who promised her a good job as a domestic worker in Lebanon. The broker convinced her to take the job opportunity, assuring her

that she did not have to pay anything. He instead took Nayantara to India, confiscated her passport, and sold her to a brothel where she was forced to have sex with at least 35 men each day with only five hours of sleep. When she tried to refuse, the brothel owner would beat Nayanthara with an iron pole until she gave in. She was not allowed to contact her family or anyone else outside of the brothel and her freedom of movement was constantly controlled.[\[8\]](#)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Modern Slavery:

In the wake of the horrors of WWII, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on December 10, 1948. In vowing to never again allow a repeat of the war's atrocities, the international community complemented the UN Charter with a road map guaranteeing the rights of every individual. The UDHR addresses slavery directly and the conditions of slavery several times:

- Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
- Article 4. **No one shall be held in slavery or servitude;** slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.
- Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.
- Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration. ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

From the Tradition:

Regarding worker's rights, the UDHR echoes Judaism. Judaism forbids denying the free will of the worker, meaning that a person cannot be enslaved and that she maintains the right to stop her work. Judaism also maintains workers have the right to satisfy their physical needs and they must be protected in hazardous situations.

In her relationship to her employer and to her labor, the free will of the worker originates with the verse:

כי לי בני ישראל עבדים

"For it is to Me that the Israelites are servants."

-Leviticus 25:55

The Rabbis added:

"And not servants to servants."

-Babylonian Talmud, *Bava Kamma 116b*

For Reflection:

- Where do rights originate?
- How were Nayantara's rights violated from the perspective of the UDHR? How were they violated from the perspective of Judaism?
- How do rights and responsibilities complement each other?

Take Action!

Encourage your local city council to pass a municipal resolution in support of better-coordinated national anti-slavery measures. To learn how to effectively engage your city council, visit: <http://ejusa.org/act/resolutions/city>.

Part VII: The Persistence of Slavery and Fair Treatment of the Worker

“Abusive labor practices constitute a hillul Hashem, a violation of God’s name.”

-2008 Union For Reform Judaism Resolution on Worker Rights

Slavery does not exist in a vacuum. Rather, it is a net result of a globalized, rapidly industrializing planet with an insatiable need for cheap, consumer goods. In addition, these factors contribute to the persistence of slavery:

- *Exploding population growth.* Between 1999-2011 the global population grew from 6 billion to 7 billion.
- *Tremendous economic inequality and devastating global poverty.* 76% of the world’s population lives on less than \$2 a day.
- *Incessant, armed conflicts.* Wars drive people from their homes and leave them vulnerable to predatory traffickers.
- *Government corruption.* When officials responsible for maintaining law and order turn a blind eye and accept bribes, slavery goes unimpeded.
- *Gender discrimination.* Women have a more difficult time finding employment, leaving them vulnerable to abuses and enslavement.
- *Ethnic and racial discrimination.* Discrimination towards certain castes and ethnicities makes opportunities fewer and increases the likelihood of enslavement.

Every one of these conditions contributes to global slavery and conspires to deny the fair treatment of workers.

From the Tradition:

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מַעֲשֶׂךָ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִשְׁבֹּת לַמַּעַן
יָנוּחַ

“Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest...”

Exodus 23:12

According to the Torah, work is sacred. In his comment on this verse, Rabbi Judah HaNasi compares work in importance to Shabbat, saying, “Just as the Jewish people were given the positive commandment of Shabbat, so were they given the commandment of working.”

-Mekhilta of Shimon bar Yochai

Since work is an essential part of the human condition, we have a responsibility to protect the dignity and rights of workers. We cannot accept that modern slavery and human trafficking are unavoidable outcomes of globalization. To acquiesce violates *k'vod ha'briyot*, basic human dignity.

For Reflection:

- What does it mean for work to be sacred?
- What are some ways for you to honor the sacred work that went into providing your food and consumer goods?

Take Action!

Write a short fictional story or draw a picture that expresses your feelings and frustrations about why slavery persists. Ask God “why?” and create your own dialogue between yourself and God.

Part VIII: Complexities of Cocoa and Slavery

Recently, the agricultural cocoa industry captured public attention for its use of child labor in the harvesting of cocoa beans. Several documentaries, including *The Dark Side of Chocolate* and a series of CNN special reports, have reported on the prevalence of child trafficking and child slave labor in Ivory Coast and Ghana.

In an interview with Malian diplomat Abodoulaye Macko, author Carol Off reported:

“...Macko pulled out a heavy sack from beside his chair. He had brought photo albums... containing evidence of what he discovered on the farms. The photographs are startling. Page after page reveals groups of dusty, frightened children...there are scores of boys in the pictures, ranging in age from about ten to eighteen; dozens of photos show the shoulders and backsides of youths with their open sores and cuts...Most of the boys had been on these farms for months of even years before Macko found them. His most depressing discovery was of a boy who was nearly dead. ‘I saw something hidden under a pile of leaves. At first I couldn’t believe it, but it was a child. He was sick, his pants were covered in excrement, and they had left him out in the field to die.’”^[9]

As an example of the horrible abuses perpetrated against children, this story should and does shock us. Yet, not all of the children who labor in the cocoa fields on the Gold Coast of Africa are slaves. According to an extensive, 2009 Tulane University study:

- An estimated 800 thousand people in Ivory Coast and almost 1 million in Ghana work in cocoa each year.

- More the 500,000 worked in violation of the International Labour Organization's guidelines regarding minimum age.
- Only 5-10% worked for pay.
- There appeared to be little evidence of slavery.

Children did labor in the cocoa fields. They did not receive pay. They frequently suffered injuries. But these conditions do not necessarily equal slavery or trafficking. Sometimes, parents in the neighboring countries of Mali and Burkina Faso send their children across the border into Ivory Coast and Ghana because they cannot feed them. While their children are unpaid for their labor, they do receive food and shelter, however meager.

Our assumption that the Western concept of childhood is universally appropriate is culturally biased. That children should only be in school and not working is not always true and the two are not mutually exclusive. For example, the small, family-run cocoa farms in Ghana rely on contributions from every member of the family, and many of these children both go to school and help on farms. Children are not only vital to production, their farm work establishes maturity, responsibility, and holds an educative value that prepares a child for adulthood. Because of these complexities, it is easier to identify a problem than it is to solve it.

Until we recognize that there are no simple solutions, we are destined to be frustrated in our efforts to effect real change.

For Reflection:

The problem of child labor in the cocoa fields cannot be solved with well-intentioned consumer campaigns such as boycotts. Ask yourself:

- If prices for cocoa are already so low that unpaid child labor is an attractive option for cocoa farmers, what would be the effect of a reduced demand for cocoa?
- Would this lower or raise the price of cocoa? Who would be most directly affected by this boycott?

Child labor in the cocoa fields requires a holistic approach to approach to reducing global poverty and economic injustice. More effective than consumer campaigns or buying Fair Trade chocolate (which may do more to make ourselves feel better about being on the advantaged side of economic disparity than anything else), these changes would do the most good:

- Free, fair democratic elections
- More efficient farming techniques that produce better yields
- An economic shift from monoculture to greater diversity among the crops grown by farmers (making them less vulnerable to economic conditions and the forces of nature).

From the Tradition:

“Our teachers have said: If all the troubles of the world are assembled on one side and poverty is on the other, poverty would outweigh them all.”

-Midrash Exodus Rabbah 31:12

Take Action!

The next time you buy chocolate:

- Insist on seeing the actual cost paid (vs. the markup) from both your grocer and the chocolate manufacturer.
- Question how much of the premium you pay to make ethical, Fair Trade choices actually reaches the farmers you are trying to help.
- Be honest with yourself. Address the possibility that ethical consumerism does as much to make you feel better about yourself as it does anything else.

Part IX: The Limits of Fair Trade and Forbidden Unethical Goods

To be Jewish today is to recognize that every person is created in the image of God and that our purpose in living is to be a reminder of God. A Jew must be sensitive to the pain of all human beings. A Jew cannot remain indifferent to human suffering, whether in other countries or in our own cities and towns. The mission of the Jewish people has never been to make the world more Jewish, but to make it more human.

-Elie Wiesel

As Wiesel wrote, we cannot remain indifferent to suffering and our mission is to make the world more human. **Buying Fair Trade is one such way to fulfill this mission.** It seeks an equitable and just commercial, cooperative partnership between marketers in developed countries and producers of both raw and finished goods in the developing world. It strives to assist in poverty reduction, to aid local community development, and to create sustainable agricultural and commercial processes.

But Fair Trade is an incomplete solution. Beyond unscrupulous businesses capitalizing on the demand for these products while failing to live up to Fair Trade promises, Fair Trade does nothing to address global production and distribution. Never does Fair Trade challenge the underlying structure of the global economy. These are the real roots of poverty, underdevelopment and slavery.

It is not clear what we accomplish when we purchase Fair Trade. While our actions state that we care about the ethical origins of our consumer products, we may be fulfilling a personal obligation to live more ethically conscious lives without really making an impact on the lives of producers. Fair Trade is not *the* solution. **It is a statement that we care just as we acknowledge the limits of our influence.**

Even as we acknowledge the limits of Fair Trade, as Jews we accept that we are responsible for knowing where the goods we purchase and consume come from. Those origins must be consistent with the demand that they be ethically produced, and this includes the fair treatment of the worker.

From the Tradition:

According to our Sages, “The first question a person will be asked by the heavenly court after he or she dies will be: “Did you deal honestly in business?”

-Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat 31a*

לולב הגזול והיבש, פסול. של אשרה ושל עיר הנדחת,
פסול. נקטם ראשו, נפרצו עליו, פסול. נפרדו עליו,
כשר

“A stolen lulav or a dried out lulav is invalid (to use to fulfill the mitzvah). [If it comes from an] asheirah (a tree used for idolatry) or from a city condemned for idolatry, it is invalid. If its tip is cut or if it is split, it is invalid. If its leaves are spread, it is kosher.”

Mishnah Sukkah 3:1

To

deny a person his wage is akin to stealing, taking something for nothing. According to the Rabbis, a stolen *lulav* is comparable to the *lulav* that was connected to idolatry. **Idolatry is the denial of God.**

For Reflection:

- What is Wiesel’s definition of justice?
- Why does the Mishnah compare a stolen *lulav* to one used for idolatry?
- What is our relationship to God and responsibility when we benefit from unethically obtained good?

Take Action!

Give *tzedakah* to these organizations committed to a 21st century Exodus of the 21 million enslaved:

Truah (*truah.org*)

Atzum (*atzum.org*)

Free the Slaves (*freetheslaves.net*)

Polaris Project (*polarisproject.org*)

Part X: Conclusion

From the Tradition:

לא עליך המלאכה לגמור ולא אתה בן חורין לבטל ממנה

Rabbi Tarfon used to say, "You are not required to finish the job; neither are you free to desist from it."

-Pirke Avot 2:21

It is time to roll up our sleeves and get to work:

"The problem of modern trafficking may be entrenched, and it may seem like there is no end in sight. But if we act on the laws that have been passed and the commitments that have been made, it is solvable."

-U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, June 28, 2011

Change is not simple and in our finite capacities we are hard-pressed to solve the problems of global slavery and human trafficking. But based on these principles, Jews we have a responsibility to make every effort:

- Every human was created in the image of God
- We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt
- We have a responsibility to the Other
- We are obligated to redeem captives
- We have a duty to honor the free will of the worker

- We are commanded to treat the worker fairly
- We are prohibited from benefitting from unethically obtained goods

What are some next steps?

- Visit the Chocolate Moses website (www.chocolatemoses.org). The site contains more complete information regarding each of the subjects discussed tonight, materials to host your own Chocolate Moses Salon and materials to augment your Passover Seder, as well as links for further learning.
- Review the "Take Action!" steps in this guide and put them into practice.

We cannot solve all the problems of the world, because we are not God. But we can be God's partners. We can do what we can, with what we've got, in the time we have. Perhaps one day we will each live to fulfill these words from our Sages:

"He who saves just one life in Israel is one who has saved an entire world."

-Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin 37a*

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- [1] 2012 U.S. State Department Trafficking in Missing Persons Report, page 14.
- [2] 2012 *U.S. State Department Trafficking in Missing Persons Report*, page 18.
- [3] U.S. Department of Labor, *2012 Trafficking in Missing Persons Report*, page 33.
- [4] Kara, Siddharth. *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*. New York. Columbia University Press, 2009.
- [5] *Huffington Post*, February 2012.
- [6] 2012 *U.S. State Department Trafficking in Missing Persons Report*, page 33.
- [7] Bales, Kevin and Ron Soodalter. *The Slave Next Door*. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2009. p. 41.
- [8] 2012 Trafficking in Missing Persons Report, page 23.
- [9] Off, page 123-124.