

## **Modern Day Dayenu by Sonya Starr**

This is a reading that is only a small sampling of the trauma, pain and suffering the Black community has experienced since coming to the United States and I am going to do it in the form of the reading, Dayenu. It would have been enough. But instead of a song of gratitude as Dayenu is during the Seder, this time think of Dayenu, it would have been enough to be validated as true trauma.

Dayenu, it would have been enough, if Blacks had been kidnapped and dragged half way around the world.

Dayenu, it would have been enough if Blacks had been enslaved, families torn apart, forced to work against their will, punished violently if try to gain ones freedom

Dayenu, it would have been enough if, in 1916, 17 year old Jesse Washington in Waco Texas was burnt alive in front of a crowd of thousands, almost all White Americans.

Dayenu, it would have been enough if, in Columbia Ohio in 1944, an essay contest question was what to do with Hitler after the war. A 16 year old Black girl wrote "Put him in a Black skin and let him live the rest of his life in America."

Dayenu, it would have been enough if, in 1948 Black tenant farmer in Mississippi was severely beaten by two whites because he asked for receipt for his water bill

Dayenu, it would have been enough in the 1950s, in Cincinnati, White Americans threw nails and broken glass into the public pools to keep blacks from swimming in them

Dayenu, it would have been enough if in August of 1970 the FBI directed Philadelphia police to invade the Black Panther Office, arresting 14 of them Six of them were then forced to strip in front of the public as news reporters and media coverage caught every second of it. The following day the photos taken of the naked men were published in the newspaper.

Dayenu, it would have been enough if the last known lynching in the United States was Michael Donald in 1981

Dayenu, it would have been enough if in 1992, in LA, the four officers who almost beat Rodney King, a Dodgers Stadium usher, to death for speeding, driving while intoxicated, and failing to yield were acquitted of the assault charges.

Dayenu it would have been enough if from 2014 to 2016, 16 million voters were removed from voting rolls. Most were Black or Brown.

Dayenu, it would have been enough if high school geography text books in Texas in 2015 portrayed slaves as “workers who’d cruised here on ships from their native Africa to toil in Southern agricultural fields.”

Dayenu, it would have been enough if in 2016 in San Francisco Police officers described Blacks and other minorities as wild animals, cockroaches, savages, barbarians, and monkeys

Dayenu it would have been enough if in 2017, at the University of Illinois, 42% of crimes reported on TV are done by Blacks even though only 10% of crimes are done by Blacks

Dayenu it would have been enough if last month Black University Students across the United States had gotten repeated death threats because it was Black History Month.

Dayenu, it would have been enough if offenders in GA today are 11 times more likely to get the death penalty if victim Are White American than if the victim is Black

Dayenu, it would have been enough if in the US Black households today are twice as likely to be food insecure than the national average.

Dayenu it would have been enough if police killed unarmed Black five times as many times as unarmed White Americans today.

Dayenu, it would have been enough to consider any one of these incidents traumatic. The cumulative/ collective effect is the definition of Historical and contemporary trauma.

Someday may we honestly add:

Dayenu, it would have been enough if all Americans including all White Americans recognized the effects of institutionalized racism, used their white privilege to

elevate Blacks and created a true representative  
democracy in the United States of America.

*If you share this, please acknowledge Rabbi Sonya Starr as the author.*