All people have a moral obligation to express outrage about the disgraceful violence against African Americans and about the systemic racism that feeds it. Even more so if one considers oneself to be an environmentalist. A key component of an ecological perspective is an understanding of the interconnection of all living things. Violence against some is violence against all. An important rationale for environmental action is to protect the health and safety of the planet's inhabitants. Wars, whether international or within a community, constantly threaten health and safety, not only for those living today, but for those who will follow.

Beyond these considerations, reverence for the beauty of the earth and the health of its systems is inextricably linked to a spiritual element. Famed conservationist Rachel Carson made this observation:

"To stand on the edge of the sea, to sense the ebb and flow of the tides, to feel the breath of a mist moving over a great salt marsh, to watch the flight of shore birds that have swept up and down the surf lines of the continents for untold thousands of years, to see the running of the old eels and the young shad to the sea, is to have knowledge of things that are as nearly eternal as any earthly life can be."

In the context of our American society, this is both an expression of reverence and direct evidence of great privilege. What a gift to be able to be able to take a breath and surrender oneself to the sensations and beauty of everything that surrounds you – whether it is the type of awe and wonder that Rachel Carson describes; or the intricate beauty of a city in motion, of a child at play, of a delicious meal, of a family gathering, or of music so beautiful that it nourishes the heart.

But this gift is denied to people who are not allowed to breath at all. And how is there space in one's thoughts for such things if the reality of life means fearing that, at any moment, you might be singled out and threatened for no other reason than the color of your skin? How easy is it to appreciate the flight of a shore bird when four hundred years of oppression have continually blocked your family's path to economic and social equality? How important is it to stand on the edge of the sea if you have to worry about your son or daughter's ability to survive while jogging on the street, or walking home from a convenience store?

We can't just spend a few days demonstrating our grief over the killing of George Floyd and then shift our attention to the other things. We all have a role in this fight – whether it is a responsibility that comes from being blind to the ways that privilege lifts us up while it pushes others down, or that comes from a need for self-

preservation, or both. If one has the ability to speak up — to keep eyes wide open, to ask the right questions, to persist in demanding greater justice, to work at rooting out inequalities in all aspects of our lives – then one has the obligation to speak up. This is what we owe our families, our communities, and people who we will never get to know.