



We are resolving to stay in the struggle.
We are renewing our collective responsibility.
We are recommitting to our vision of a transformed world.

Nearly three years into the genocide in Gaza and two years into Trump's attempted fascist reign, our grief, rage, and heartbreak knows no end.

We grieve the Israeli military's destruction of Palestinian life, of homes, trees, hospitals, universities, villages. Each life we are taught is an entire world. The Israeli military has destroyed countless worlds and is continuing to do so. The Israeli military is destroying the fabric of Palestinian society, is robbing children of their futures, is murdering parents and babies, pillaging the land, fracturing communities again and again. We grieve how this unspeakable violence will reverberate for generations, that even if the genocide, occupation, and apartheid stopped tomorrow, these wounds will last lifetimes. We grieve that Israeli society is based on supremacy and conscripts its children into genocide and war. This is an affront to us as human beings and a disgusting distortion of the Jewish tradition.

We grieve, and will continue in grief and in rage for generations to come.

But to despair is different than to grieve. Despair is what we feel when we cannot imagine a way through. Our opposition wants us to despair, because it leads to inaction. When we grieve, we bring our aching hearts with us into the continued work of our lives.

In these conditions, fighting despair is a revolutionary act.

Palestinians have been struggling for decades, against all odds. We honor Palestinians and all those who resist empire by honoring our grief, refusing despair, and letting our passion fuel our continued struggle and world building.

When we reflect on this year, we lived through the crushing conditions of expanding facism, we witnessed the brutality of the Israeli military's ongoing genocide and we also saw the beauty and power and possibility of a movement that refuses to give up.

We saw cities, states, and institutions across the country divest from Israel bonds and weapons manufacturers. We saw neighbors protecting neighbors in our streets and staving off ICE occupation. We saw Palestine movement organizers being elected to every level of public office. We saw anti-Zionist Judaism and Jewish communities expanding exponentially in depth and breadth as more and more of our people realize we can divest from Zionism and live full and meaningful Jewish lives rooted in justice and solidarity

On the high holidays, we declare that the year ahead is not predetermined, that we the people have power to determine through our actions the course of the future.

Let the sound of the shofar awaken us from despair and resignation, so that we can see that every day holds the possibility of something new and previously unimaginable.

For all those who seek life and liberation, we say: welcome, come in, come home, build it with us.

Jewish history is a history of ruptures that lead to renewal. We are living anti-Zionist Judaism as something that appears now to be a rupture, but is in fact the only livable future of Judaism. Zionism is a path of bunkered mutual destruction, anti-Zionism is a path of collective liberation. For all those who seek life and liberation, we say: welcome, come in, come home, build it with us.

In this season, may the wisdom of our ancestors give us the resource, language, strength to embolden ourselves to continue the fight: Palestine will be free, Palestinians will return home and live in safety, freedom, and dignity.

We commit to teshuva: internal and relational transformation.

We commit to t'fillah: personally, publicly, and collectively declaring our dedication.

We commit to tzedkah: material action to change conditions towards justice.

Below, we offer rituals from Jewish tradition, updated to reflect this current moment. We invite you to use them, add to them, adapt them in your communities and families, by yourself and with friends, in any setting that will support you to renew and recommit to the struggle for justice in Palestine and in our cities and around the world in the year to come.

Tashlich

What is Tashlich?

Tashlich (you shall cast away), from שלך (shalach, to throw or fling) is also related to *shalechet*, shedding. This casting off comes at the New Year, during the period of [Teshuvah](#), when we turn to look within ourselves, individually and collectively, as a way to re-commit to being our better selves.

It is important that the ritual “casting off” of Tashlich is action done both as individuals and as a collective so that we can help each to recognize, repent, reject, and then begin to repair the harm done in our name. This “casting off” lays the foundation for a commitment to collective action now and in the new year. The “casting off” is only complete when it leads to active repair.

Tashlich is a *minhag*, a tradition that offers a way to come together across the spectrum of Jewishness - People who are secular or cultural Jews, as well as people who find connection with prayer and/or religious observance all resonate with this practice. It is practiced by people gathered by a body of water (the seashore, a stream, or a river) to symbolize atonement and purification. In places where there is no nearby body of water, Jewish communities prepare a special cistern ahead of time to carry out the custom.

On the longstanding role of Tashlich in our movements for Justice:

“Many of our organizations and much of our work organizing for a transformed world can at times become permeated with guilt and shame. There is so much work to be done and no one person or group can ever do it all. But through the ritual of collective tashlich we can transform our individual burdens into collective responsibility. When we come together to name the harms of the Israeli occupation, settler colonialism on Turtle Island, racism and white supremacy, mass incarceration and policing, climate degradation and wealth hoarding, it becomes clear that none of us can possibly hold all of this on our own. We do collective tashlich to take collective responsibility for the overwhelming hurt and harm in our world. We commit together to working to avoid the practices, patterns and worldviews that constrict and harm. We publicly commit to, in the new year, striving lovingly to practice something different.”

[For Times Such As These. by Rabbis Ariana Katz and Jessica Rosenberg](#)

Tashlich is meaningful as a solo practice, with family and friends, communities and organizations. We invite you to gather at water, or gather water, take time to reflect on the year that’s been, what you want to cast off and what you want to bring into the new year.

Reading for Tashlich 5787

We will cast off despair, we commit to struggle.

We will cast off powerlessness, we commit to taking actions big and small.

We will cast off dehumanization, we commit to honoring all life.

We will cast off Jewish supremacy, we commit to collective liberation.

We will cast off fear, we commit to courage.

We will cast off isolation, we commit to connection.

We will cast off indifference, we commit to action.

We will cast off anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia, we commit to unlearning all forms of racism and oppression.

We will carry our ancestors to guide our path forward.

We will carry movement elders to bring practiced wisdom into our work.

We will carry the responsibility of being stewards for future generations.

We will carry our lessons from the past year into the year to come.

We will act to honor the power and possibility within all of us.

We will act to end the genocide in Gaza.

We will act to support liberation and self-determination for Palestinian people.

We will act to end the US enabling Israel's violent systems.

We will act to dismantle systems of apartheid and occupation.

We will act to bring divestment, boycott and sanctions into the everyday.

We will act to stop the flow of U.S. tax dollars to the Israeli military and infrastructure.

We will act in community and in relationship to each other.

Al-Chet

What is Al-Chet?

Recited ten times throughout Yom Kippur, during the Al Cheit (על חטא) prayer, we tap or pound our chests with each line, collectively naming ways in which we've missed the mark, both how and why. We read it in the plural ("for what we have done") so that no one has to hold it alone. In the traditional liturgy, the list includes both actions we've done ("for the sin we committed by cheating a person") and ways of being ("for the sin we committed by being stubborn"). We confess sins we may not have personally committed because we take responsibility as a community for all that we are intertwined with.

We then chant a pleading refrain: "and for them all, God of Forgiveness, please forgive us, pardon us, help us atone!" This liturgy is spread throughout the day of Yom Kippur, and interwoven with the festival liturgy of gratitude and celebration of peoples' ability to change, our ability to turn over a new page, and Divine compassion that is always already present.

Some communities create new al-chet readings each year, in some services there is space left for personal al-chet recitation and adding our own words. The al-chet below was created by Jewish Voice for Peace organizers, reflecting on who and how we've been in the past year in our work to end the U.S.-Israel alliance, to stop the ongoing genocide and ethnic cleaning in Gaza and the West Bank, and reflecting on the work of fighting rising fascism in our home places. We reflect on ways we've missed the mark interpersonally, and on ways that we are unwittingly, by nature of where we live and the communities we are a part of, complicit in violence. We ask for forgiveness, knowing that we are together in the struggle of transforming our conditions and ourselves.

You are invited to read this al-chet, use it as the beginning of writing your own al-chet, or inviting your community to craft and reflect on the al-chet liturgy together.

AI-Chet 5787

For the misdeed of staying silent in times when we could have spoken up.
For the misdeed of inaction when we could have taken action.
For the misdeed of judging too harshly and not being open to change.
For the misdeeds of speech, for the misdeeds of action.

For the misdeed of not caring for our comrades and valuing each other's contributions.
For the misdeed of settling for less than our best.
For the misdeed of not giving people we organize with the benefit of the doubt.
For the misdeed of being impatient and short with others we organize with when we are tired, overwhelmed, and angry.
For the misdeed of thinking some organizing tasks are too small for us to do.
For taking our exhaustion out on each other and ourselves.

For the misdeed of speaking for others rather than ourselves.
For the misdeeds of erasing and not investing in learning about the breadth, depth and diversity of Jewish histories and cultures.
For organizing from a place of deference and tokenism rather than principled solidarity.
For the misdeed of not giving direct feedback, and for responding to feedback with defensiveness rather than openness.
For the misdeed of allowing movement drama to drown out movement work.
For the misdeed of calling out or canceling rather than calling in and figuring out how to work across conflict and difference.

For the misdeed of believing we are powerless.
For the misdeed of thinking we have to do everything on our own.
For the misdeed of taking on more than we can sustainably do.
For the misdeed of pushing ourselves beyond our capacity.

For the misdeeds of our tax dollars being used for war and genocide.
For the misdeeds of our ancestral traditions being used for war and genocide.
For the misdeeds of embodying violence and supremacy.

For all that we have done, for all that we have left undone, for all that we have inadvertently enabled and for all that we have been unable to put an end to, we humbly ask:

May we be pardoned, may we be forgiven, may we be cleansed.

Shofar

What is the Shofar?

Most commonly made of a ram's horn, the shofar is blown through the High Holiday season, every day of Elul and during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (except when the holidays fall on shabbat, as day one of Rosh Hashana does this year, 5787). The shofar sound has many evocative meanings, we often think of it as a wake-up call. It can also be blown in celebration and proclamation.

This year, alongside devastating loss, we have experienced previously unimaginable wins in our movement for justice in Palestine and building anti-Zionist Jewish life. It is essential that we notice and name the places that we've learned, grown, and won, both personally and collectively: so that we can sustain ourselves and our organizing, so we can see where we have power so that we can flex it in the year to come, and so we can invite more and more people into the movement for a Free Palestine.

Below is an offering of wins big and small. You are invited to share them in your high holiday rituals and gatherings, and encouraged to add to them!

Shofar 5787

We sound the shofar!

For Salah Sarsour being reunited with his family after being detained by ICE.

For connecting our work and our formations with anti-ICE organizing and other anti-facist organizing because freedom for Palestine is interconnected with a broad front against authoritarianism.

For launching Boycott and Divestment campaigns in new places.

For Washington State divesting from Caterpillar, the first time that a state has divested from a BDS target as the result of a campaign pushing for enforcing ethical investing policies.

We sound the shofar!

For taking our organizing and our organization seriously, doing the work of administration, financial, legal, and other tasks that are so important to being a functional and resilient organization.

For going up to strangers and asking them to sign a divestment petition again and again

For building long-term campaigns that will have a material impact on the US-Israeli alliance instead of planning another reactive rally that would feel good but not make a real difference.

For responding to difficult feedback with positive action, reflection and change.

For working to elect candidates in Colorado, New York, Michigan Florida, Texas, who are speaking clearly about genocide, calling for an end to the US funding Israel's military.

For creating new formations and sharpening our collective work more than ever

For winning divestment and non-reinvestment campaigns in Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Maryland and Louisiana, and for getting a legally binding divestment resolution on the Rhode Island ballot for this November.

For students getting their disciplinary cases dropped.

For more and more congresspeople dropping AIPAC.

For 75 congresspeople endorsing Block the Bombs legislation.

We sound the shofar!

For approaching every new member 1:1 with fresh excitement and genuine investment in each new person joining our movement.

For building new systems and structures that work better for the political moment we're in, rather than sticking with how we've been doing things.

For bringing new people into our movement. For developing new members into new leaders. For seeing the potential in each person, uncovering the gifts and power within each member.

For conquering fears of phone calls and bravely calling to connect and ask for support!

For knocking on doors for the first time, and the second, and the third times.

For having hard conversations with other Jewish people on the doors, over and over.

For doing the hard work of studying to learn how to build impactful and strategic campaigns.

For taking time to be together, breaking bread, for deepening relationships amidst all our work.

For continuing to fight against the war machine with every fiber of our collective being, despite the rising tides of fascism and repression.

In 5787 may we sound the shofar for a free Palestine, for liberation, safety, thriving, to life and homecoming for all people.