



TASHLICH RITUAL

Casting Off of Complicity to Funding Israeli Settlements

1. Welcome to this moment

Welcome all. It is so good to bring in the New Year together.

We have come to this body of water to perform Tashlich, a Jewish ritual for realigning oneself and community with tikkun olam in preparation for the New Year and to set intentions for action for 5784.

*Find a partner. Welcome each other.
Share what brought you to this ritual.
We'll call you back with a song in a few minutes.*

As we reflect on the past year, writer Adrienne Maree Brown has said, “things are not getting worse, they are getting uncovered. We must hold each other tight and continue to pull back the veil.”

As the veil is pulled back, we are seeing a rise in overt expressions of white nationalism, white supremacy, anti-black racism, and antisemitism, more people being detained at borders and deported, increased racist and ableist state violence, continued occupation and violence towards climate protectors, increased vulnerability of Black and brown and indigenous peoples, poor people, disabled people, queer and trans people, and Muslim people, and our hearts are heavy as we witness the continued occupation and violence, including withholding of water and pouring cement in wells near Hebron, and cutting off electricity in the West Bank and Gaza. The mask of Israeli “democracy” has been ripped away to show the face of the Israeli apartheid state.

2. Land Acknowledgement

We honor the indigenous people(s) of the land we are on.

May acknowledgment of this land we stand on, stewarded by _____inform and bolster conversations about how non-Indigenous people can support Indigenous sovereignty and advocate for land repatriation.

3. Overview of Our Time Together

- a. Some words about Tashlich and what makes this particular Tashlich ritual different
- b. What are we casting off?
- c. Is boycotting Psagot wine kosher?
- d. Accepting Responsibility
- e. Casting off—call and response
- f. Commitments
- g. Some songs and poems along the way

4. What is Tashlich?

How many here today have been at a Tashlich ritual before?

The ritual offers the opportunity to move our bodies, shake out our pockets, and cast/ throw things into water.

Tashlich was practiced by our ancestors since the 14th century and shaped in as many different ways as there have been Jewish communities around the world. Whether practiced in Egypt, Kurdistan, Galicia, or India, the intention was the same: to recognize, assume responsibility and cast off the ways we “missed the mark”, as individuals and as community, during the past year. This casting off comes at the New Year, during the period of Teshuvah, when we turn and look within ourselves, individually and collectively.

Jewish people gather in a community setting and experience the ritual next to a body of water (the sea-shore, 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. The practice is to symbolically cast away our transgressions by throwing bread crumbs or pebbles into the water while reciting biblical verses. Many who practice Tashlich, look to the Book of Micah (7:9) “You will hurl all of our sins into the depths of the sea”. We use “transgressions” or “missing the mark” as in archery which is a more precise translation than “sins”.

But today, instead of throwing bread crumbs or pebbles, we’ll pour out some symbolic “Psâgot wine” with the acknowledgement of each transgression.

Why Psâgot wine? The Falic family—one of the biggest private, U.S. funders of Israeli settler colonialism and Palestinian dispossession—produces this “kosher wine” on an illegal settlement on stolen Palestinian land in the West Bank and sells it at Falic-owned Duty Free Americas airport retail shops across the U.S. and Latin America, as well as at retailers like Total Wine. That’s just one of the products and stores that we’ll be calling to strategically boycott—we are getting ready for the full “We Don’t Buy It” campaign to be launched in the New Year. Today, we focus on Psâgot wine—a symbol of not just Falic family transgression, but our personal and collective transgression in being complicit in the millions of private U.S. dollars sent each year to fund right-wing settler organizations that further the ongoing Nakba.

5. What Are We Casting Off?

Jewish tradition teaches us to pursue justice, and we face this commitment openly, freely, and sincerely. The casting off comes at the New Year, when we reflect upon the year gone by and dedicate ourselves to the new one before us. So, as we symbolically cast off these transgressions, we prepare ourselves for the coming year in which we will take them up again.

We recommit ourselves to supporting the self determination for Palestinians, to end the occupation of Palestine, and to work for racial and economic justice at home and around the world.

We cast off complicity to funding Israeli settler violence and the forced displacement of Palestinian families by boycotting Falic-owned stores and products, as well as strategically using our collective power by demanding that U.S. companies not sell these products.

We Don't Buy It!

6. Is Boycotting Psagot Wine Kosher?

While we don't all keep kosher, Psagot relies on their kosher stamp for marketing, so it's worth examining. Kashrut, Jewish dietary laws, asks the question, 'What can we use?' The great principle of torah which determines whether or not something is kosher is whether or not it causes preventable harm. We are instructed not to profit or benefit from anything, when produced or consumed, that causes preventable harm to human beings, animals, or the environment. When harm does occur, the rabbinic sages have applied the principle of boycott, or refraining from use until the harm is repaired or the activity ceases. An example of boycott can be found in the Mishneh. "One may not sell the oppressors or masters of privilege bears or lions to be used at gladiatorial events, nor anything else which may result in injury to the public. (Avodah Zarah, mishnah 1:7)

How much more so, when the production of a consumer product is embedded in land theft, human rights abuses, and promotion of hatred toward other human beings. Definitely not kosher.

7. Accepting Responsibility

Since the late nineteenth century, acts against Palestinians have been done in our name. When we don't speak out it continues in our name.

We have forsaken our responsibilities to speak out

- by not questioning what our teachers and rabbis taught us
- by accepting on faith that the ongoing Nakba in Palestine either didn't happen or happened for good reason

- by collecting tzedakah to plant trees covering up the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian villages
- by spending summers on Ulpan or with Birthright and never being curious about how our actions affected Palestinians
- by accepting gifts of Israeli bonds
- by accepting the fiction of a peace process
- by allowing our US tax dollars to fund violence against Palestinians
- by allowing Zionist organizations to usurp our faith.

We choose to be responsible for all of these transgressions. And today, we choose to cast them into the water. To no longer be complicit. To acknowledge the danger of unknowing and silence. To chart another course for the coming year and the years to follow.

We take up a renewed commitment to pursue justice by focusing our boycott on Falic-owned products and using this campaign to raise awareness of BDS in our communities. If we are not prepared to embrace this commitment, then our act of casting off is but an empty gesture. Let's not detach from our responsibility for these injustices as we move forward into this new year.

from East Jerusalem, 1987: Bet Shalom

- Irena Klepfisz

Always	there is migration	
	on this restless planet	everywhere
	there is displacement	somewhere
	someone is always telling	someone
		else
	to move on to go elsewhere.	
Night.	Jerusalem. Yerushalayim.	
Jerusalem.	If I forget thee	
Oh Jerusalem	Hebron	
Ramallah	Nablus Qattana Jenin if I	
forget thee	oh Jerusalem	
	Oh Hebron may I forget	
	my own past my pain	
the depth of my sorrows.		

8. Casting Off

Today we have the opportunity to cast off both personal and collective transgressions. We will begin with ways we have collectively missed the mark, everyone pours off a bit of Psâgot wine with each refrain “We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.” Each pouring off is a reminder of the complicity we are casting off. And then there will be an opportunity for people to add, aloud

or silently, anything you want to release in order to fully return to wholeness and to recommit to working towards justice.

Take a moment to read through these statements. Join in on the ones that are particularly resonant. We'll pause quietly between each statement.

[*One participant calls; the assembled community responds with the refrain.*]

For hardening our hearts instead of fully recognizing what it means to be oppressed and dispossessed.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For allowing fear, overwhelm, or indifference to keep us numb, passive, and silent in the face of white supremacy and racism.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For allowing violence against Palestinians to be committed in our name.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For complicity with the stealing Palestinian land and the destruction of Palestinian homes, schools, places of worship and healing.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For ignoring Palestinian civil society's call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israeli oppression.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For knowingly buying Israeli products produced on stolen Palestinian land.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For standing by as the infrastructure in Gaza is destroyed and the blockade strangles the economy.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For not speaking out against anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For not deepening our understanding of the diverse experiences of Palestinian peoples, including past and present resistance and organizing that we have much to learn from.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For invisibilizing and marginalizing Jews of color around the world, including Israel where they are the majority of the population.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For the ways in which we, and our ancestors, have benefited from the occupation of stolen land.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For remaining ignorant to the insidious faces of the Israeli occupation, including the repression and targeting of Palestinian poets, artists, educators, activists, and cultural workers.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For not recognizing tactics to divert our attention from the violence of the occupation including pinkwashing and greenwashing.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For turning away from the realities and dangers of the relationship between Israeli military personnel and U.S. police departments and state agencies, a relationship which institutionalizes Islamophobia and perpetuates a shared racist ideology and lethal policing practices.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For remaining silent on issues of racism, white supremacy and the occupation of Palestine in our synagogues, in our communities, in our families, and in our homes and for allowing mainstream Jewish institutions to speak on behalf of all American Jews.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For not gifting ourselves with the opportunity to deepen into and imagine Jewishness and Judaism free from nationalism and white supremacy; for allowing shame or internalized antisemitism to drive us to participate in Christian dominance and disconnect us from our rich traditions and histories.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For allowing our money to fund the building of settlements, walls, increased policing and militarization, mass incarceration, and the exploitative privatization of natural resources here and in Palestine.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

For losing sight of the power of collective organizing and its ability to foster justice in Palestine.

We take responsibility, we will work to make it known, we will work to make it end.

TOGETHER:

We cast away pessimism and cynicism, and we lift up the choice to believe—in ourselves and in one another—that we can be, we are, the change we have been waiting for.

We cast away narrow thinking and hopelessness and we commit to nourishing our collective imaginations and wild dreamings of justice and liberation; we open our heart-minds to dream, vision and work towards what we have been told is impossible.

INDIVIDUAL MEDITATION:

Take some quiet time on your own by the water.
We will call you back to a closing circle:

We sing you healing.

We sing you care.

We sing you justice.

We sing you praise.

10. Closing: A casting of what we keep

[*Invite participants to step away from the water and form a closing circle*]

We take a moment now to thank the water for allying with us, as water has done for us and our people for centuries, for receiving the energy of our transgressions and transforming it, so that that which we release becomes life-giving, fortifying, and sustaining for all beings.

V'ahavta

Aurora Levins Morales

<http://www.auroralevinsmorales.com/blog/vahavta>

Say these words when you lie down and when you rise up,
when you go out and when you return. In times of mourning
and in times of joy. Inscribe them on your doorposts,
embroider them on your garments, tattoo them on your shoulders,
teach them to your children, your neighbors, your enemies,
recite them in your sleep, here in the cruel shadow of empire:
Another world is possible.

Thus spoke the prophet Roque Dalton:
All together they have more death than we,
but all together, we have more life than they.
There is more bloody death in their hands

than we could ever wield, unless
we lay down our souls to become them,
and then we will lose everything. So instead,

imagine winning. This is your sacred task.
This is your power. Imagine
every detail of winning, the exact smell of the summer streets
in which no one has been shot, the muscles you have never
unclenched from worry, gone soft as newborn skin,
the sparkling taste of food when we know
that no one on earth is hungry, that the beggars are fed,
that the old man under the bridge and the woman
wrapping herself in thin sheets in the back seat of a car,
and the children who suck on stones,
nest under a flock of roofs that keep multiplying their shelter.
Lean with all your being towards that day
when the poor of the world shake down a rain of good fortune
out of the heavy clouds, and justice rolls down like waters.
Defend the world in which we win as if it were your child.
It is your child.
Defend it as if it were your lover.
It is your lover.

When you inhale and when you exhale
breathe the possibility of another world
into the 37.2 trillion cells of your body
until it shines with hope.
Then imagine more.

Imagine rape is unimaginable.
Imagine war is a scarcely credible rumor
That the crimes of our age, the grotesque inhumanities of greed,
the sheer and astounding shamelessness of it, the vast fortunes
made by stealing lives, the horrible normalcy it came to have,
is unimaginable to our heirs, the generations of the free.

Don't waver. Don't let despair sink its sharp teeth
into the throat with which you sing. Escalate your dreams.
Make them burn so fiercely that you can follow them down
any dark alleyway of history and not lose your way.
Make them burn clear as a starry drinking gourd
Over the grim fog of exhaustion, and keep walking.

Hold hands. Share water. Keep imagining.
So that we, and the children of our children's children
may live

*Aurora Levins Morales is a Puerto Rican Jewish writer and poet
Visit her blog at <http://www.auroralevinsmorales.com>*

[*Pass out apples and a jar of honey for everyone to share*]

As we close our ritual today, we invite you to share one thing you are grateful for during our time together and something you are committing to in the coming year. After you have spoken, you are invited to take a bite of your apple dipped in honey and enjoy the sweetness!

May your year be filled with love and justice.

L'Shana Tova!

FINAL SONG:

*Mimainei hayeshua
Shavtem mayim b'sason*

We will draw water in celebration
From the wellsprings of liberation

[Written by Avra Shapiro in collaboration with Yael Schonzeit]

Psagot Winery is majority-owned by the Falic Family, who are among the biggest private US funders of Israeli settler colonialism and Palestinian dispossession. They are also key donors to overtly supremacist and racist, far-right politicians—both in Israel and in the US. We call for a boycott of Falic-owned products and stores until they stop funding such right-wing orgs and Israeli settler violence. Following the Palestinian call to boycott illegal Israeli settlement products, we also call for a boycott of wines from the Falic family owned Psagot Winery, which is built on and sourced from stolen Palestinian land.



~~PSAGOT~~

NON-ETHICAL WINE

We cast off our complicity with Israeli apartheid state violence in Palestine, and injustice within our local communities.

- For allowing violence against Palestinians to be committed in our name.
- For the ways in which we, and our ancestors, have benefitted from the occupation of stolen land.
- For not deepening our understanding of the diverse experiences of Palestinian peoples, including past and present resistance and organizing that we have much to learn from.

NOT ETHICALLY KOSHER, PRODUCED AND SOURCED ON STOLEN LAND

- For knowingly buying Israeli products produced on stolen Palestinian land.
- For ignoring Palestinian civil society's call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israeli oppression.

- For allowing our money to fund the building of settlements, walls, increased policing and militarization, mass incarceration, and the exploitative privatization of natural resources here and in Palestine.
- For not speaking out against anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia.
- For complicity with the stealing of Palestinian land and the destruction of Palestinian homes, schools, places of worship and healing.
- For losing sight of the power of collective organizing and its ability to foster justice in Palestine.

**We take responsibility,
we will work to make it known,
we will work to make it end.**