

**NISHMAT SHOOM  
TASHLICH L'TZEDEK 5781**

*Opening song*

*Wash me away*

*so that all that's left is love, Shekhina.*

**The Offering: A Tashlich Prayer**

**by Rabbi Jill Hammer**

I cast this gift to the water.  
It is my past: blessing and regret.  
It is my present: reflection and listening.  
It is my future: intention and mystery.  
It is what I did  
and did not;  
it is yes and no and silence.  
It is what was done  
and what arose from what was done  
and what arises in this body remembering.  
I let it all go. I own  
neither the sting nor the sweetness.  
I hold on to nothing.  
The river has no past.  
Each moment of rushing water  
Is a new beginning.  
Harm that has been:  
heal in the rush of love and truth and time.  
We who are lost:  
let the current take us homeward.  
May these waters churn what is broken

into what is whole.  
May each separate droplet  
reach the ocean that is becoming.  
The journey awaits.  
I have no power to refrain from it;  
only to steer it when I can.  
May the One who is  
the great Crossroad  
guide my turning.  
Three times I declare:  
It is finished.  
It is born.  
It is unending.  
Three times I listen:  
It is love.  
It is the river.  
It is before me.  
May my offering go where it is meant to go  
and may the one who offers it  
find the way.  
Amen.

## History and Explanation of Tashlich

*Tashlich* (you shall cast away), from שלך (shalach, to throw or fling) is also related to *shalechet*, shedding. This time of year, we are invited to ask ourselves:

What are we casting away this year? What are we shedding? What must we release in order to be more fully aligned with our values and our visions?

Since the late medieval period, Jews have observed the practice of Tashlich, often on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. It is based on several passages in the bible, most notably Book of Micah (7:9): “You will hurl all of our sins into the depths of the sea.”

The practice is to go to a nearby body of water, preferably free-flowing, and cast away that which is no longer serving us, by either throwing bread crumbs or pebbles into the water. Although this is a symbolic gesture, the act of stepping into collective ritual invites us to embody, to live into, and to be accountable to the intentions we voice.

During the Days of Awe, the Jewish High Holy Days, we ask an element of the Earth, in this case the element of water, to support us in making individual and collective transitions; releasing habits, unconscious practices, ways of thinking and relating to ourselves, our communities and our world, that are out of alignment with our higher selves and higher vision.

The word used here, “*khet*” has historically been translated as sin, but is actually an archery term that means “to miss the mark”. The idea is not that we suddenly get rid of these mis-steps, but that we set our intentions on transforming them.

We know from experiences in our bodies, and from science, that water is a conductor and that, through cycles of rain and condensation, all water is connected. As we make these offerings, we hold that, in many places in the world, water is a site of struggle - in Gaza, for First Nations and Indigenous peoples, and for people of the Global South.

As we partner with the element of water in this ritual, we also pray for waters to run free and clear all over the world, from the Cannonball River in North Dakota, to the taps in Flint, Michigan, to all the water sources in Palestine, and all the places around our globe that continue to be impacted by wildfires, and we pray that all beings everywhere have access to the water they need to sustain life and to thrive.

## WATER BLESSING

*B'rucha at shekhinah eloteinu ruach ha-olam asher kid-shanu bi-tevilah b'mayyim hayyim.  
Blessed are You, Shekhinah, Source of Life, Who blesses us by embracing us in living waters.*

“We are made of water: Salty rivers run in our veins, lymph ebbs and swells, saliva and tears leak into the air and dry. We are always changing: wide seas into clouds, rain into puddles, rivers into muddy fields that run along ditches into the sea. We flow, freeze, boil, rise, disperse, are hurled this way and that. We declare that we are the blue edge of glaciers, the great ocean swell, stagnant teeming ponds, months long tropical downpours, the delicate tracery of frost on a dry leaf, rusty drip of a faucet. We are the shape of what’s happened to us. We are caught up in doing, and whirl through our lives, suffering, joyful, filled with doubt. And yet we return to ourselves again and again, to the Self that is all there is. We are made of water, called to find our true level by that great force of love we call gravity. We are made to trust our destination. We are not lost.”

*-Aurora Levins Morales*

## CASTING OFF

For the ways in which we, and our ancestors, have benefitted from and survived because of the occupation of stolen land - here on the land that we call North America and in Israel/Palestine - and for our participation in the violations of indigenous land sovereignty and treaties.

For the ways in which we, and our ancestors, have benefitted from and survived because of ongoing colonization and the enslavement of African and indigenous people.

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

For colluding with anti -Arab racism and Islamophobia by not speaking up in our local communities or as we move through the world; for prioritizing our own comforts and privileges over the rights and safety of Muslim lives.

For not following the lead of Black, brown, and indigenous organizers and heeding the call for reparations for past and continuing harms, from colonization and slavery to mass incarceration, police violence and surveillance.

For allowing violence against Palestinians to be committed in our name, including the relentless attacks on the people of Gaza, the control and withholding of water, the continuous theft of Palestinian land and the destruction of Palestinian homes and olive groves.

For remaining ignorant and complacent to the insidious faces of the Israeli occupation, including the repression and targeting of Palestinian poets, artists, educators, activists, and cultural workers and not recognizing systemic tactics to divert our attention from the violence of the occupation including pinkwashing and greenwashing.

For turning away from the realities and dangers of the Deadly Exchange- 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 and predatory policing practices.

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.

For not challenging white supremacy within white Jewish communities, eclipsing the presence of, and keeping us from recognizing, centering, uplifting and learning from Jews of Color, Mizrahi and Sephardi Jews; for the ways in which I default to Ashkenazi culture and practices without recognizing the harm and the pain that this erasure perpetuates.

For the times I did nothing when Jews of Color were asked if they were “the help” in Jewish spiritual spaces or had their Jewish identity questioned or denied.

For the ways I failed to challenge the mainstream narrative of Jews as necessary “white allies” to Black struggle, thereby erasing the strong presence and leadership of Black Jews.

For the ways that my desire to find home in Jewish space undermines my commitment to create spaces where Jews of all marginalized identities can feel safe, valued and held.

For refusing to see anti-Semitism as interconnected with racism, classism, transphobia, homophobia, ableism, and xenophobia and allowing Jews to use claims of antisemitism to justify racism and violence.

For not gifting myself the opportunity to deepen into and imagine a Judaism free from nationalism and white supremacy; for allowing shame or internalized antisemitism to drive me to participate in Christian dominance, disconnecting me from our rich traditions and histories.

For participating in cultural or spiritual appropriation, spiritual bypassing, and neoliberalism.

For the ways I collude with capitalism and imperialism that has a catastrophic effect on our Earth, especially the People of the global South.

For the ways that my actions on a daily level dishonor the earth; for the ways I misuse and abuse resources without recognizing the urgency and crisis point that we are living in.

For deciding that organizing and responding to the catastrophic effects of climate genocide is someone else's work.

For not honoring all bodies as unique, essential, whole, and sacred; for not centering the rights and access needs of disabled people in our movements and communities, especially those who live at the intersections of oppression; for the ways in which I allow my ableism to get in the way of working towards real collective liberation.

For not listening to young people and to my elders and for not honoring young people and elders' power and wisdom within Jewish communities and beyond.

For not honoring the wisdom, power, and self-determination of queer, trans, and gender non-conforming people within Jewish communities and beyond.

For not doing more to save the lives of Black trans women and other trans women of color.

For dulling my outrage at the current distribution of wealth and refusing to see the ways in which I participate in classism and resource hoarding.

For the ways I take for granted my access to clean and safe air, water, housing and land.

For every item i've bought from Amazon while knowing that my purchase contributes to the exploitation of workers and funds concentration camps at our borders.

For not doing more to support asylum seekers in my community. For allowing any human Being to be labeled "illegal".

For allowing my money to be used to fund the building of walls, increased policing and militarization, mass incarceration, and the exploitative privatization of natural resources.

**Closing song:**

*Healing is possible, may it be so.  
Healing is happening, may it be so.  
And we believe that what we need most  
Are the hearts of each other right here.*

-Orion Johnstone

For more information about Jewish Voice for Peace Western Mass:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/JVPWMASS/>

Email: our email: [westernmass@jewishvoiceforpeace.org](mailto:westernmass@jewishvoiceforpeace.org)

Jewish Voice for Peace opposes anti-Jewish, anti-Muslim, and anti-Arab bigotry and oppression. JVP seeks an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem; security and self-determination for Israelis and Palestinians; a just solution for Palestinian refugees based on principles established in international law; an end to violence against civilians; and peace and justice for all peoples of the Middle East.

JVP national website:

[jewishvoiceforpeace.org](http://jewishvoiceforpeace.org)

*Tashlich ritual written by Kohenet Dori Midnight and Kohenet Joanna Kent Katz -  
with inspiration and language adapted from Jewish Voice for Peace Seattle,  
Jews For Racial and Economic Justice JOCSM caucus,  
and the work of Sins Invalid's Skin, Tooth, and Bone disability justice primer.*

**May your year be sweet with love and justice.**

**L'Shana Tova! Anyada buena, dulce i alegre! A zis nay yor!**