



Tashlich Tzedek

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Philadelphia Jews for a Just Peace
www.ajjp.org/Philadelphia

Song: By the waters of Babylon, we lay down and wept for thee Zion.
We remember thee, Zion.

We begin wherever we can.
We begin in our thoughts, in our
one-on-one interactions, in our
choices about how we will use
what privilege we have.
We begin by talking about it.
We begin with awareness.
We begin over and over and over.
We begin by listening, by hearing
our grief, our rage, our arrogance,
our ignorance, our brainwashing.

And beginning is no small thing.

- Carolyn Gage

We come after the Holocaust and after the creation of the State of Israel. The memories of Deir Yassin, Jenin, and Gaza, the haunting sound of helicopter gunships, the sound of Hebrew being spoken to order the demolition of homes and to halt Palestinians burying their dead – these cannot be ignored or transcended as if nothing has happened to us as a people. There are Jews of conscience who accept this culpability, but we are learning that acceptance is not a return to innocence.

Jews of conscience are on our own – and as amazing as the silence of the Jewish establishment is, our speech in the last years is audacious and plentiful.

A further learning: there will always be Jews who speak truth to power. There will always be Jews who say no to injustice. There will always be Jews who refuse silence and accept exile rather than be complicit in atrocity. There will always be Jews who speak and live the prophetic in the ashes and beyond. The commanding voices of Sinai and Auschwitz demand no less of us. They can be heard only in the struggle to end the cycle of violence and atrocity that has engulfed the Jewish people and now ties us irrevocably to the Palestinian people.

Our desire is less to rescue or even to resurrect a just and compassionate Judaism that is in danger of disappearing from the earth than it is to rescue from oblivion the lives of the victims of this violence, past and present. That rescue is our task.

- Mark H. Ellis

I belong there. I have many memories. I was born as everyone is born.
I have a mother, a house with many windows, brothers, friends, and a prison cell
with a chilly window! I have a wave snatched by seagulls, a panorama of my own.
I have a saturated meadow. In the deep horizon of my word, I have a moon,
a bird's sustenance, and an immortal olive tree.
I have lived on the land long before swords turned man into prey.
I belong there.
And I cry so that a returning cloud might carry my tears.
I have learned and dismantled all the words in order to draw from them
a single word: Home.

- Mahmoud Darwish

From Micah 7:13, 16, 19

והיתה הארץ לשממה על-ישביה מפרי מעלליהם. יראן גוים ויבשו
מכל גבורתם. ישוב ירחמנו יכבש עונתינו ותשליך במצלות ים
כל-חטאתם.

*V'hayta ha'aretz lishmamah, al yoshveha, mip'ri, ma'al'lehem. Yiru goyim v'eyvoshu, mikol
gevuratam. Yashuv v'rahameynu, yihbosh avonoteynu; v'tashlih bim'tzilot yam, kol hatvotam.*

*And the land shall be desolate for those that dwell there, because of the fruits of their doings.
The nations shall see and be put to shame. But the Spirit of the World will have compassion on
us and purge us of injustice; and our sins will be cast into the depths of the sea.*

from Fifty Years On

-Lisa Suhair Majaj (1998)

1.
Sixty years on
I am trying to tell the story
of what was lost
before my birth

the story of what was there
before the stone house fell
mortar blasted loose
rocks carted away for new purposes, or smashed
the land declared clean, empty

before the oranges bowed in grief
blossoms sifting to the ground like snow
quickly melting

before my father clamped his teeth
hard
on the pit of exile
slammed shut the door to his eyes

3.
history erased the names
of four hundred eighteen villages
emptied, razed
all that remains
a scattering of stones and rubble
across a forgotten landscape

4.
the houses of Deir Yasin
were built of stone, strongly built
with thick walls
a girls' school a boys' school a bakery
two guest houses a social club a thrift fund
three shops four wells two mosques
a village of stone cutters
a village of teachers and shopkeepers
an ordinary village

light traces the bloodstains

light glints off the trucks
that carried the men through the streets
like sheep before butchering

light pours into the wells
where they threw the bodies

light seeks out the places where sound
was silenced

6.

*without water, we stumbled into the hills
a small child lay beside the road
sucking the breast of its dead mother*

*outside Lydda soldiers ordered everyone
to throw all valuables onto a blanket.
one young man refused.
the soldier pulled up his rifle
and shot the man.
he fell, bleeding and dying*

he fell to the earth
they fell to the earth

the earth held them
the earth soaked up their cries

their cries sank into the soil
filtered into underground streams

fifty springs on
their voices still rise from the earth

fierce as the poppies
that cry from the hills each spring

8.

the river floods its banks
*littering the troubled landscape
we pick our way amid shards*

heir to a generation
that broke their teeth on the bread of exile
that cracked their hearts on the stone of exile
necks bent beneath iron keys to absent doors

Psalm 51: 1-3

חנני אלהים כחסדך כרב רחמך מחה פשעי. הרבה כבסני מעוני
ומחטאתי טהרני. כי-פשעי אני אדע וחטאתי נגדי תמיד.

*Honeyni elohim k'hasdeha; kerov rahameha m'heyf'shahai. Herev, hab'seyni
meyavoni; umeyhatati tahareyni. Ki f'sha-ai, ani eyda; v'hatati negdi tamid.*

*May the Spirit of the World have compassion upon me and forgive my transgressions.
May I be washed of injustice and cleansed of wrongdoing. For I acknowledge my
transgressions; my sin is always before me.*

Source of Life that sustained my parents and my ancestors,
May my prayers open my heart.
I have been given freedom to choose between right and wrong
And I have not always chosen wisely.
Now, together with this community of Jews,
I ask forgiveness.
I have not done all the misdeeds which I am about to name
Yet I come before You not only as an individual,
but also as a cell in the body of my community,
my people, and the whole human race.
I am implicated in the acts, good and bad,
that any of us does.

TOGETHER:

We are one and together we take responsibility
for the misdeeds and wrongdoings
of our community and our people.

Recitation of Transgressions

For the lie that Palestine was a land without a people, *for conspiring to erase a people from history and eject it from the land, for the knowing and intentional dispossession of three quarters of a million native Palestinians, for the catastrophe that was and is the Nakba:*

We cast these sins away,
we will work to make them known,
we will work to make them end.

For “Hafradah” – Apartheid -- *the official governmental policy of separation of Jews from Palestinians – for two sets of civil law, two justice systems, two systems of education, two systems of healthcare, two systems of highways, a societal regime of racial and ethnic segregation, separate and tragically unequal:*

We cast these sins away,
we will work to make them known,
we will work to make them end.

For destroying houses, *bombing power stations, destroying wells, uprooting orchards, dumping chemicals and sewage, stealing water, detonating sonic booms – for purposefully making Palestinian life unlivable:*

We cast these sins away,
we will work to make it known,
we will work to make it end.

For building the Apartheid Wall, *imprisoning Palestinians into ghettos, for depriving them of access to their own lands, for checkpoints, for blockading medical access to medical treatment and education and work, for settling more than 300,000 Jews in occupied Palestinian land as a way to make a just peace impossible:*

We cast these sins away,
we will work to make them known,
we will work to make them end.

For the brutal assault on Gaza, *for wholesale destruction of civilian neighborhoods, for “targeted killings” of Palestinian activists, for the killing and injuring of thousands of civilians, including more than 1,000 children:*

We cast these sins away,
we will work to make them known,
we will work to make them end.

For killing, maiming, and imprisoning innocent children, women and men – *in the last ten years, more than 5,000 Palestinians have been killed in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, including at least 1,500 unarmed children. And more than 10,000 Palestinians are held in jails and “administrative detention,” without due process, without access to legal counsel, regularly subjected to torture:*

We cast these sins away,
we will work to make them known,
we will work to make them end.

For laying siege to Gaza, *starving 1.5 million civilians in the world’s largest open air prison, destroying families and livelihoods, barring access to medical care, and cutting off Gazans from the rest of Palestine and from the world community:*

We cast these sins away,
we will work to make them known,
we will work to make them end.

For the U.S. government’s support of these policies -- support that has buttressed the Occupation and enabled the illegal transfer of hundreds of thousands of Jews from Israel, Russia and the United States into Jewish-only colonies in the West Bank and East Jerusalem — sustained by money, arms and military equipment from the United States:

We cast these sins away,
we will work to make them known,
we will work to make them end.

For the refusal of the Jewish establishment in the United States to speak out against the suffering of the Palestinian people, while pretending that the Occupation increases the safety of Jews. *These organizations do not speak for us. Their lies are abhorrent to us. Their efforts to muzzle dissent and suppress the truth are an insult to Jewish tradition. Jewish leaders who point to the suffering of Jewish victims in Israel and invoke the memory of the Nazi Holocaust -- while remaining silent about the suffering of Palestinian victims -- do not represent us. We speak out as a Jewish voice of protest against Israel’s state-sponsored terrorism, in opposition to the U.S. Jewish leadership’s support of those acts, and as a voice of compassion for their victims:*

We cast these sins away,
we will work to make them known,
we will work to make them end.

From Psalm 130:1, 7-8

ממעמקים קראתיך יהוה; יחל ישראל, אל-יהוה כי-עם-יהוה
החסד והרבה עמו פות. והוא יפדה את-ישראל מכל עונותיו.

*Mima'anakim k'ratihah adonai: Yahayl yisrael, el adonai, ki-im adonai hahesed;
v'harbey imo f'dut. V'hu, yifdey et-yisrael -- mikol avonotav.*

*Out of the depths I have cried out: Let Israel have hope in the Source of Life, for in that
Source is forgiveness and abundant mercy. And may Israel be redeemed from all its
iniquities.*

Amein.

*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.

Song: Peace, Salaam, Shalom.

Philadelphia Jews for a Just Peace

Founded in October 2000, Philadelphia Jews for a Just Peace works against the continued Israeli occupation and colonization of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, and for the human and civil rights of all peoples of historic Palestine. Speaking as Jews and U.S. citizens, we call for

- equal political, economic, and social rights, and the application of international law and human rights conventions for all who live in the region
- abolition of the Israeli policies of *hafradah* - separate and unequal sets of laws and rights for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and within Israel
- a just solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees, including recognition by Israel of the international law guaranteeing all people's right of return
- an immediate end to collective punishments and human rights violations against Palestinians
- support for the rights of Israelis and Palestinians to collective sovereignty within a political entity or entities of their own choosing
- a shared Jerusalem, with equal access for all peoples to holy sites in the city
- equitable distribution of critical resources, including water, oil, gas, electric power
- cessation of all U.S. government aid to Israel that serves to support its occupation and colonization of Palestine
- support for Palestinian struggles for economic sustainability

Philadelphia Jews for a Just Peace meets monthly in West Philadelphia and Northwest Philly. We have several ongoing projects including the Trees of Reconciliation campaign, education within the Jewish community, and campus organizing. We also work in solidarity with peace and justice activists in Philadelphia, throughout the United States and on the ground in Israel/Palestine. Join us!

Look for us on Facebook!

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