

## Repentance and Atonement Are NOT Just for Jews

A Note to Our Non-Jewish Readers on How This High Holiday Workbook Can Be of Use to You

*Tikkun* is not just for Jews—it is interfaith as well as Jewish. This High Holiday workbook is an invitation to all people to join with the Jewish people in using the period from September 28, the evening of Rosh Hashanah (the day of both celebrating the birthday of the Universe and of remembering who we have been this last year), until nightfall ten full days later on Yom Kippur (the Day of “At-one-ment” on October 8), to rethink our personal and communal reality and engage with the process of *teshuva* (returning to our highest selves and turning away from the ways we’ve missed the mark in this past year).

בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִכְתְּבוּן. וּבְיוֹם צוֹם כְּפוּר יִחְתְּמוּן.

High Holidays 5772 / *Yomim Nora'im* (The Days of Awe)

## America Needs Repentance

Repentance is particularly needed in the United States at this historical moment, given our society’s problems.

We are painfully aware that somewhere between 16 percent and 18 percent of Americans are unemployed or underemployed, and that this causes huge suffering not only to them and their families, but also to a large part of the rest of the population, which finds itself unable to count on those who are unemployed to purchase goods and services or to donate to the nonprofit sector. Yet we’ve watched as our own elected representatives have voted for an austerity program instead of trying to convince the American public of the urgent need for a massive jobs program. Such a program could match or exceed the New Deal’s WPA program of hiring the unemployed to rebuild the crumbling infrastructure of our country.

Meanwhile, we’ve turned our backs on the two most pressing problems of the planet: the increasing destruction of our global environment and the unmet needs of many people worldwide facing poverty, starvation, and a lack of housing, food, and adequate health care. And we continue to squander hundreds of billions of dollars on a useless war in Afghanistan and on close to a thousand military bases around the world to protect American corporate interests.

Instead of building a political movement to provide genuine alternatives to the two branches of the pro-corporate party of the wealthy, we’ve fallen back into the “lesser evilism” rut of backing the least bad branch of that party. Instead of creating a genuinely

pro-people and pro-environment political party, we sit around bemoaning our bad fortune for having elected a president who almost immediately abandoned all that he promised to do, and consoling ourselves that he's not as bad as the extreme reactionaries being put forward by the other branch of the pro-corporate party. Yet it is this strategy that has created the space for the emergence of right-wing quasi-fascist forces and a deeply reactionary mood that is now shaping public discussions and may soon shape our national government as well.

Moreover our government empowers the most reactionary government Israel has ever had. Our leaders have vetoed every UN effort to give some measure of support to the occupied Palestinians, making purely token statements of opposition to Israel's escalating campaign to build settlements in East Jerusalem and other parts of the West Bank.

In the time since taking office, President Obama has not yet taken the kind of consistent stands for peace, human rights, environmental sanity, social justice, and defense of the weakest and poorest elements of our society that many of his supporters imagined he would. Moreover, when he has taken positive steps, as in his attempt to extend health care coverage, he has faced massive opposition from the elites of wealth and power and their allies in the media, and this has often led him to compromise on principled issues in ways that have undermined the value of some of the programs that actually got passed. We see all this as a reflection of our own failures to build a movement for social change that does not depend on a given political party or political leader but rather mobilizes us ordinary people to struggle for global environmental survival, justice, and peace. These failures on the part of the liberals in Congress and the Obama administration, plus our own failures, have generated a deep disappointment commensurate with the deep hopes we harbored in 2008.



"The Big Bang" by David Friedman

In the United States, Israel, and most other advanced industrial countries, this year's High Holidays once again come at a time of massive hypocrisy, nationalist chauvinism, repression of civil liberties and human rights, environmental destructiveness, ascendancy of a "Tea Party" consciousness that cares little for the well-being of the poor and the powerless and affirms a "me-firstism" and selfishness that is abhorrent to Jewish values, and denial of the most critical issues facing our planet. Instead we persist in the "war against terrorism"—now switched in focus to Afghanistan and Pakistan, while tens of thousands of troops remain as "advisers" in Iraq—which we use to justify military aggression against countries whose regimes we abhor. There still is too little attention to the daily suffering of 2.8 billion people on the planet living on less than two dollars a day, or the 850 million people who are hungry, or the 12,000 to 20,000 children who, according to UN estimates, die *every single day*

of starvation or of preventable diseases related to malnutrition.

This is only one dimension of the atonement our society needs; Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur is about inner transformations, as well as the societal transformations we need.

Too many of our synagogues and churches condoned Israel's behavior toward Palestinians and the killing of more than 1,600 Gazans in December of 2008 and January of 2009, then joined in denouncing the UN commission chaired by its Jewish chair Judge Goldstone when it reported on the human rights violations committed by Israel (and by Hamas), just as they joined in justifying Israel's attack on the Gaza Aid Flotilla in June of 2010. Instead of honestly and publicly atoning for the sins that Israel has perpetrated this past year, Jewish spokespeople once again deflected the conversation to the sins of the Palestinian people or their supporters. And we've allowed the Jewish community to be represented as completely opposed to the Palestinian bid for recognition and/or full membership in the UN.

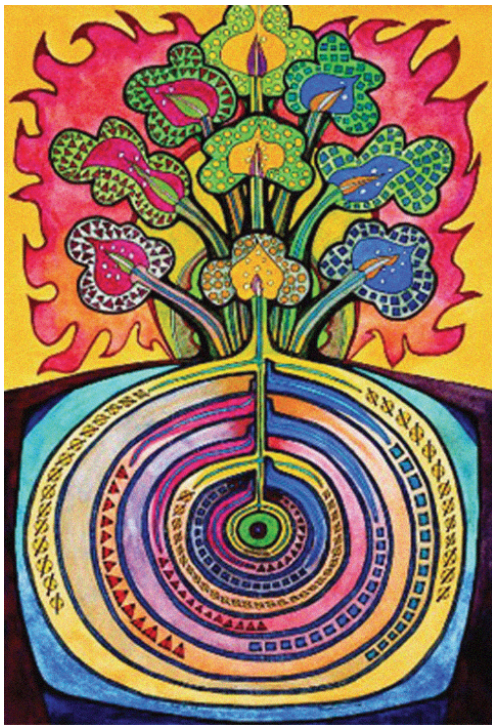
Yet even as we atone for the outrageous behavior that is an inevitable part of the Occupation that has been going on since 1967, we also join those who decry the violence of Hamas, the bombings of Sderot and other southern Israel cities, the intransigence of many Palestinians in not unequivocally recognizing the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state within the pre-1967 boundaries, the hate-filled statement toward Jews articulated by some of the leadership in Iran and by some extremist elements within the Muslim world, and the acts of violence and destruction of property against some Jews around the world by those who blame all Jews for the sins of some.

Meanwhile, many Jews interpret righteous indignation at Israeli behavior toward Palestinians as anti-Semitism. Indeed, to the extent that the Jewish people and our institutions worldwide continue to oppose all attempts by governments and human rights groups to push Israel to end the Occupation, and allow Israel to claim to speak in the name of the Jewish people, we as Jews do in fact take on some responsibility for Israeli behavior. We cannot say, "Hey, that's just Israel—it's not us Jews," unless we are actively and publicly involved in organizations such as the Tikkun Community/Network of Spiritual Progressives, J Street, Jewish Voice for Peace, or others that are saying much more than the rather weak, "Don't expand existing settlements, and get back to negotiations." The suffering of the Palestinian people is in fact our responsibility—and it is not negotiations we want, but to end the Occupation of the West Bank and to free the people of Gaza from all Israeli-imposed restrictions on travel to the West Bank or to the rest of the world. We want to end Israeli-imposed restrictions on Palestinians' export of goods to the rest of the world, as well as any other restrictions other than those on the importation of weapons.

We Jews, stuck in Holocaust memories from more than sixty-five years ago, are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. With compassion and kindness, we need to encourage our people to recover, to recognize that we are no longer powerless but powerful, and then to strive to *make Israel a country that becomes internationally famous not for its arbitrary power over others, but for its generosity and caring for the Palestinian people and for all the people of the region in which Jews have chosen to live.* I explain this in far greater detail in my new book, *Embracing Israel/Palestine*, which is

being distributed by Random House. It will be available from Amazon and on Kindle and will, I hope, also appear at your local bookstore by December 2011.

If you do go to synagogue, you'll hear the Haftorah on Yom Kippur in which Isaiah recounts God's message: "Is not this the fast that I desire: to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and unloose the bonds of oppression?" And yet, you'll find few synagogues organizing their people to help promote the Global Marshall Plan, the Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, or anything similar. They'll engage in a monthly "feed the poor" or "house the homeless" activity, and label that their "*tikkun olam* activities," but few will engage in active campaigns to change the larger economic policies and presuppositions of the capitalist system that have led to increased poverty and homelessness and the triumph of a global ethos of selfishness and materialism.



"Tree of Life" by David Friedman

We at *Tikkun* encourage you to stand up for the vision of the prophets for a world of peace, justice, and love. And yet try to do it with compassion for our fellow human beings, fellow Americans (yes, those in the Red States as well as the Blue States), and our fellow Jews (even the ones who demean and slander us) because they, like us, are flawed and yet also beautiful embodiments of the spirit of God. Our righteous indignation, so very necessary, must be balanced with compassion, love, and forgiveness.

It's easy to feel righteous indignation about the distortions of the United States or Israel, but don't let that keep you from facing your own personal issues as well. Just as we advocate compassion for the United States and Israel, and celebrating of the good parts of them while strongly critiquing what is wrong with them, so also do we urge you to use this period to do your own inner work with compassion for yourself, while still being honest enough to really evaluate

and then form plans for how to change those aspects of your own personal being that need transformation. We at *Tikkun* and in the Network of Spiritual Progressives know full well how much we need to do this work ourselves.

To acknowledge our own screw-ups is an important first step. But the High Holidays are not about getting ourselves to feel guilty, but rather engaging in a process of change. If we don't make those changes internally and in our communities and in our society, all the breast-beating and self-criticism become an empty ritual.

In many situations and relationships, you are not the only part of the problem—but for the sake of this process, *it is your part that you are to focus on, not the part contributed by your partner, spouse, parents, children, friends, etc.* Begin to work on your part during these ten days of repentance/teshuvah!

*On these days, our focus is not on what others did to us, but on what we ourselves did to lessen our connection to our highest possible selves and to our highest manifestation of the God-energy of the universe!*

## What is spiritually out of alignment in my relationships with...

	PROBLEM	WHAT YOU CONTRIBUTE TO IT
<i>Parents</i>	1.  2.	
<i>Spouse or Partner</i>	1.  2.	
<i>Friends</i>	1.  2.	
<i>Children</i>	1.  2.	

## How spiritually nourishing is your work?

**W**hat have been the problems you've faced here? Have you had good relationships with co-workers? Have you felt fulfilled in your work? Have you been involved in collective efforts to change the workplace, or the union, or tried to organize—or have you felt powerless and unable to envision changing anything? If you were in a supervisory position, did you treat your supervisees with the respect that they deserve? Did you discharge anger from work by punishing yourself (e.g., through alcohol or drugs) or by dumping on friends or lovers—or did you express that anger at the appropriate targets or through collective action? Have you taken any of the steps to fight for a “new bottom line” at work?

See [www.spiritualprogressives.org](http://www.spiritualprogressives.org) for ideas on how to do this.

### PROBLEM

### WHAT YOU CONTRIBUTE TO IT

*Relationship to co-workers.*

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*Relationship to supervisors or supervisees.*

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- How healthy were your coping mechanisms for stress at work?
- Did you inappropriately blame yourself, or dump anger inappropriately on others?
- What kind of political action did you take in relationship to work?

## Did you show adequate respect for your body?

Did you care for your body this past year? If not, what didn't you do that you should have done?

Eating

Exercise

Vacations

Clothing, Appearance, and Self-Presentation

## Quiet Time or Meditation

### **Are you taking enough time to nourish your soul?**

- Did you care for your soul this past year? If not, what didn't you do that you should have done? In what ways did you care for your soul this past year?
- In what ways did you neglect your soul? Did your soul give you any messages that you ignored? What were they?
- Did you take time to read books that would have expanded your awareness of spiritual life? If not, what do you want to read this next year? Did you give yourself alone time for meditation, for prayer, or for walks in nature?
- Did you take the time to read other books that would have given you pleasure and joy? If not, what do you want to read this next year?
- What courses (evening schools in liberal arts or a new profession, art programs, Hebrew, Jewish studies, studying a new musical instrument, learning about another culture or philosophical tradition) did you take to expand your horizons? What would you like to take this next year?
- What pleasures did you give to yourself this year? Which do you want to expand or initiate this coming year? Did you allow yourself to go to art exhibits, plays, musical concerts, poetry readings, discussion groups, community political action activities, or other events that would have given you pleasure? What do you want to do in this regard in the next year?
- In what ways did you explore your relationship with God or however you wish to name the spiritual dimension of consciousness this past year? In what ways did you ignore that dimension of life? Did you read any books, attend lectures or courses, or dedicate time to exploring the spiritual dimension of your life? Would you be willing to read (or reread) *The Left Hand of God*, *Spirit Matters*, *The Politics of Meaning*, *Jewish Renewal*, *Embracing Israel/Palestine*, or other spiritually enlivening books, and make a commitment now to doing so in the course of this coming year?

### **Are you giving real energy to *tikkun olam*, to healing and repairing the world?**

- Which of our society's political, economic, or social institutions have destructive consequences to the environment, social justice, or our capacity to be loving and compassionate human beings? Have you challenged any of them in the public arena?
- What concrete steps have you taken to be involved? What will you personally do to change the status quo? Will you support the Global Marshall Plan or the Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

(both can be read at [www.spiritualprogressives.org](http://www.spiritualprogressives.org))? Another option is to urge Israel and the United States to back full membership for Palestine in the UN in a resolution that would also support Israel's right to exist in security within recognized borders as a Jewish state that gives full equality in every respect to the religious, national, and ethnic minorities living there (the same that we ask of Palestinians). If not, what will you actually do, or what campaigns or projects will you support with your money and/or your time?

- If you haven't been involved, what were the reasons you gave yourself? Which of those reasons presupposed a "surplus powerlessness" (a way in which you were actually assuming yourself less able to initiate things or take leadership than is "objectively" true)? In what ways did you buy the message that "they will never listen," or, "I can never get things to happen," or, "I'm not powerful enough to start something so I'll wait for someone else—like President Obama—to do it," or, "Other people are not together enough, or too immoral, or too passive, so there's no point in me trying to mobilize them," or other similar messages?
- If you tried to be involved, and had hassles or disappointments with other people in the process, what were those and what part did you have in making or sustaining them? What did you do to confront the problems directly? Would you be open to working with the Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP), *Tikkun*, Beyt Tikkun, the One Campaign, the School of the Americas Watch, 350.org, the B'Tselem (Israeli Human Rights Organization), J Street, Jewish Voice for Peace, Pax Christi, Zen Peacemakers, Evangelicals for Social Action, UUA, Baptist Peace Fellowship, or some other national organization doing work with ideals in which you can believe, *and which one will you commit to now and actually stick with that commitment?*

## **Did you help build a connection to Judaism and the Jewish world or to whatever spiritual tradition or discipline makes sense to you?**

- How much did you seek to deepen your knowledge of Judaism, Jewish history, Jewish texts, or the culture of the Jewish people or of Israel? Or of whatever other religious tradition or spiritual discipline speaks to you? What opportunities were there and what were the reasons you gave yourself for why this year wasn't the right time? Will you make time for this in this New Year?
- Did you allow yourself to take twenty-five hours out of your busy schedule each week to observe Shabbat or some similar weekly spiritual practice in a traditional way? Did you meditate, pray, say the prayer of forgiveness before going to sleep, or some other spiritual practice? How fulfilling or spiritually deep did you allow it to be? If it wasn't, what explanations did you give yourself for why it wasn't working? What could you personally do to make that spiritual practice or some other spiritual practice work for you on a daily or at least a weekly basis?

# ועל כלם אלוה סליחות, סלח לנו, מחל לנו, כפר לנו.

## Teshuvah “partner” or support group

**W**e encourage you to get a teshuvah partner—someone who can support you to be serious about the process and someone who doesn’t have a personal stake in the decisions you make about how you will live your life this coming year.

The partner’s task is not to make concrete suggestions, but to encourage you to explore all the possibilities that you might face as you consider how you might wish to transform your life. After you’ve done this exploring, switch roles so that you become the facilitator, and you encourage your teshuvah partner to face the possibilities of change.

*Partner’s name or names of people in the support group:*

(Use a separate piece of paper if necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Do not convey the impression that you know that a particular road is the right one for this person. Instead, keep asking about a wide variety of options, and help the person consider these options through asking, whenever a stumbling block appears, whether that person can think of any ways to get around it. After Yom Kippur, check in with each other once a month to see how you are doing on keeping to your current intentions.

### CHECKING IN WITH EACH OTHER

*During the week, arrange to talk to your teshuvah partner every day (yes, every day). The phone call can be as short as, “Did you get to work on your teshuvah work today? If not, do you want to do it now on the phone? If not now, is there some time later today we can discuss it?” On Shabbat, arrange for a time to get together (one hour, half of which goes to one person, half to the other, to explore both of your issues and the steps you are taking).*

## FOR OUR SINS

### A Supplement to the High Holiday Prayer Book (not a replacement).

We invite you to use the following along with the traditional confessional prayer, *Al Cheyt*, recited on Yom Kippur. Read this every day between September 28 and October 8. Bring this and, in addition, bring your own list to Yom Kippur services. Do not just go through the rote of reading the traditional “sins” many of which actually reach to the ways we “miss the mark” in our contemporary reality. If you are not Jewish or not going to any High Holiday service, use this at your home or with your friends any time during these ten days of repentance!

*READ OUT LOUD IN YOUR SYNAGOGUE OR REPENTANCE GROUP:*

*On the Jewish High Holidays, or whenever we are doing repentance work, we take collective responsibility for our own lives and for the activities of the community and society of which we are a part. We affirm our fundamental interdependence and interconnectedness. We have allowed others to be victims of incredible suffering, have*

*turned our backs on others and their well-being, and yet today we acknowledge that this world is co-created by all of us, and so we atone for all of it.*

***While the struggle to change ourselves and our world may be long and painful, it is our struggle; no one else can do it for us.*** *To the extent that we have failed to do all that we could to make ourselves and our community all that we ought to be, we ask God and each other for forgiveness—and we now commit ourselves to transformation this coming year, as we seek to get back on the path to our highest possible selves.*

*Chant: Ve-al kulam, Eloha selichot, selach lanu, mechal lanu, kaper lanu.*

**For all our sins, may the Force that makes forgiveness possible forgive us, pardon us, and make atonement possible.**

For the sins we have committed before You and in our communities by being so preoccupied with ourselves that we ignore the larger problems of the world;

And for the sins we have committed by being so directed toward outward realities that we have ignored our spiritual development;

For the sins committed in the name of the American people through our invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and the violence we used to achieve our ends;

And for the sin of not rebuilding what we have destroyed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan;

For failing to prosecute those in our government who enabled the torture of prisoners around the world and in American detention centers and the denial of habeas corpus and other fundamental human rights;

And for the sin of not demanding that our elected representatives provide affordable health care and prescription drugs for everyone, and for not demanding dramatic changes that are needed to save the planet and lessen the power of big money to shape our democratic process, so that it no longer primarily serves the interests of the corporations and the wealthy;

For the sin of those of us in the West hoarding the world's wealth and not sharing with the 2.5 billion people who live on less than two dollars a day;

And for the sin of supporting forms of globalization that are destructive to nature and to the economic well-being of the powerless;

For the sins of all who became so concerned with "making it" and becoming rich that they pursued banking and investment policies that were destructive not only to their investors but to the entire society;

And for the sins of blaming all Muslims for the extremism of a few and ignoring the extremism and violence emanating from our own society;

For the sin of being cynical about the possibility of building a world based on love;

And for the sin of dulling our outrage at the continuation of poverty, oppression, and violence in this world;

For the sin of not being vigilant stewards of the planet and instead allowing the water resources of the world to be bought up by private companies for private profit;

And for the sin of allowing military spending and tax cuts for the rich to undermine our society's capacity to take care of the poor, the powerless, the young, and the aging, both in the United States and around the world;

For the sin of not doing enough to challenge racist, sexist, and homophobic institutions and practices;

And for the sin of turning our backs on the world's refugees and on the homeless in our own society, allowing them to be demeaned, assaulted, and persecuted;

For the sin of not sharing responsibility for child-rearing;

And for the sin of not taking time to help singles meet each other in a safe and emotionally nurturing way, and instead making them fend for themselves in a marketplace of relationships;

For the sin of being so concerned about our own personal tax benefits that we failed to oppose tax cuts that would bankrupt social services;

And for the sin of not taking the leaflets or not opening the emails of those who tried to inform us of what was going on in the world that required our moral attention;

For the sin of missing opportunities to support in public the political, religious, spiritual, or ethical teachers who actually inspire us and whose teachings would help others;

And for the sin of being passive recipients of negativity or listening and allowing others to spread hurtful stories;

For the sin of being "realistic" when our tradition calls upon us to transform reality;

And for the sin of being too attached to our own picture of how our lives should be—and never taking the risks that could bring us a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

**For these sins we ask the Force of Healing and Transformation to give us the strength to forgive ourselves and each other.**

For the sins we have committed by not forgiving our parents for the wrongs they committed against us when we were children;

And for the sin of having too little compassion or too little respect for our parents or for our children or our friends when they act in ways that disappoint or hurt us;

For the sin of cooperating with self-destructive behavior in others or in ourselves;

And for the sin of not supporting each other as we attempt to change;

For the sin of being jealous and trying to possess and control those we love;

And for the sin of being judgmental or listening to (or even spreading) negative stories about the personal lives of others;

For the sin of withholding love and support;

And for the sin of doubting our ability to love and get love from others;

For the sin of insisting that everything we do have a payoff;

And for the sin of not allowing ourselves to play;

For the sin of not giving our partners and friends the love and support they need to feel safe and to flourish;

And for the sin of being manipulative or hurting others to protect our own egos.

*Chant: Ve-al kulam, Eloha selichot, selach lanu, mechal lanu, kaper lanu.*

For the sins we have committed by not publicly supporting the Jewish people and Israel when they are being criticized or treated unfairly; or for not challenging unfair singling out of Israel for criticism by our allies in the anti-war movement;

And for the sins we have committed by not publicly criticizing Israel or the Jewish people when they are acting in opposition to the highest principles of the Jewish tradition;

For the sin of not taking anti-Semitism seriously when it manifests around the world, among our friends, or in our community;

And for the sin of seeing anti-Semitism everywhere, and using the charge of anti-Semitism to silence those who raise legitimate (though painful to hear) criticisms of Israeli policies;

For the sin of allowing the Jewish community to portray itself as the innocent victim and for allowing Holocaust trauma to legitimate oppressive treatment of others;

For the sin of not publicly challenging those Jewish teachers and leaders who support policies that would undermine the capacity of our government to maintain the minimal social and economic supports that have been established for the poor and to protect the environment;

And for the sins of allowing Judaism to be represented by the most wealthy and powerful rather than those most closely aligned with God's injunction to pursue justice and peace and love (not only for Jews, but for all);

For the sin of letting the entire Jewish people take the rap for oppressive policies by the most reactionary and human rights-denying government the State of Israel has ever had;

And for the sin of being so disheartened that we stopped paying attention to the details of what is happening in the West Bank and Gaza—thereby ignoring the massive suffering that a self-described Jewish state imposes on others;

For the sin of knowing in our hearts that what Israel has been doing is morally wrong but refusing to say this in public;

And for the sin of not also saying in public what is positive about Israel and the Jewish people;

For the sin of blaming the entire Palestinian people for (inexcusable and murderous) acts of violence by a handful of terrorists—and then cutting off water, food, and access to medical care for more than one million people;

And for the sin of bulldozing Palestinian homes, killing Palestinian children, and torturing, assassinating, and oppressing the Palestinian people;

For the sins that Israel committed by creating the checkpoints that make travel an unbearable hassle for many Palestinians and by creating a separation wall that effectively grabs up more portions of Palestinian land;

And for the sins that American Jews have committed by giving blind loyalty to the Israeli far-right lobby and believing that the critics of that lobby are being disloyal or alienated from the Jewish people or from Israel;

For the sin of teaching hatred about Palestinians and Muslims, and then claiming that it is only they who teach hatred;

And for the sin of portraying every Palestinian or Muslim as a hater;

For the sin of condemning Palestinian or Muslim extremists as typical, while “understanding” our own and claiming that they are exceptions to our normal generous and kind attitudes;

And for the sin of insisting that there is no “moral equivalence” between the deaths of innocent Israeli civilians and the deaths of innocent Palestinian civilians;

For the sins of tribalism, chauvinism, and thinking our pain is more important than anyone else’s pain;

And for the sin of allowing religious and communal institutions, colleges and universities, government and politics, the media, and the entertainment industry to be shaped by those with the most money, rather than those with the most spiritual and ethical sensitivity;

For the sin of not putting our money and our time behind our highest ideals;

And for the sin of not learning the Jewish tradition; not studying Jewish history, literature, and holy texts; and not learning the depth, wisdom, and meaning for our lives that can be found in Jewish spirituality and prayer and on a Jewish path;

For the sin of thinking that our path is the only path to spiritual truth;

And for the sin of allowing conservative or insensitive leaders to speak on behalf of all American Jews;

For the sin of not providing public support and financial backing to the few Jewish leaders, organizations, and publications that do actually speak our values;

And for the sin of not recognizing and celebrating (with awe and wonder) the beauty and grandeur of the universe that surrounds us;

For the sin of not seeing the spirit of God in others;

And for the sin of not recognizing and nurturing the spirit of God within ourselves;

For the sin of not praying, meditating, or giving adequate attention to the needs of our soul;

And for the sin of focusing only on our sins and not on our strengths and beauties;

For the sin of not transcending ego so we could see ourselves and each other as we really are: manifestations of God’s loving energy on earth.

*Chant: Ve'al kulam Elohai Selichot, selach lanu, mechal lanu, kaper lanu.*

**For all these, Lord of Forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.**

Repentance is not meant only as an exercise to help us feel better, but also as the beginning of organizing our personal and communal lives to begin the process of changing. To join with others in this sacred work, please join the Network of Spiritual Progressives and *Tikkun*: [www.spiritualprogressives.org](http://www.spiritualprogressives.org) or [rabbilerner@tikkun.org](mailto:rabbilerner@tikkun.org).  
Composed by Rabbi Michael Lerner, editor, *Tikkun* magazine, for Yom Kippur 5772.