

A large yellow sun with a white center and orange ring is in the top left. Three simple line-art birds are in the top right.

PROCLAIM

RE:LEASE

REIMAGINE THE SHMITA YEAR / שמיטה

VISIONARY ART MAGAZINE
Vol. III

LAB/SHUL

DAYS OF AWE 2021
ימים נוראים תשפ"ב

SHMITA'S FOUR SEASONS: FOUR PATHS TOWARDS RELEASE AND RENEWAL

This Visionary Magazine, dedicated to the Shmita Year of Release is divided into four chapters, echoing the four seasons of the year. Each chapter explores one path towards better balance and greater justice in our private and public lives – learning from the lessons of Shmita how to rest and reset, release and repair.

BODY:

How to cultivate mindfulness and better balance between home and work, body and soul.

HOME LAND:

What are the critical ways Shmita inspires us to fight against continued racial injustice, colonialism and greed?

HOLY LAND:

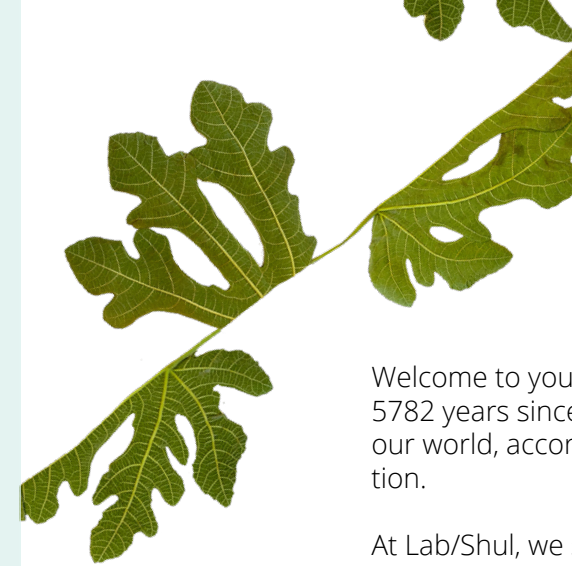
Shmita-inspired reflections towards less violence and more coexistence on the sacred land shared by Israelis and Palestinians.

MOTHER EARTH:

Is this finally the year we all rise up in response to our environmental crisis?

Lab/Shul is an everybody-friendly, artist-driven, God-optional, experimental community for sacred Jewish gatherings based in NYC and reaching the world.

This Visionary Art Magazine was collaboratively curated by Amy Handelsman, Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie, Marijke Silberman and Sarah Sokolic. Graphic design by Nicole Dancel. Copyright 2021.



Welcome to your New Year, marking 5782 years since the creation of our world, according to Jewish tradition.

At Lab/Shul, we strive to live in balance and harmony with all life.

Grounded in principles of caretaking and responsible stewardship, we gather to heal and gain new perspectives; we learn, pray and engage with our traditions in chorus with the land and living waters. At our homes and in the places that welcome us as we gather, we strive to honor the ground we are on, and the sky that shelters us, to honor our bodies and souls.

The Lab/Shul community is celebrating these Days of Awe in the Hudson Valley in New York State, coming LIVE to your screens and homes all over the world. We are grateful to our friends at City Winery for the generous hospitality.

The beautiful winery venue where we are hosting is a 200 year old nationally registered historic landmark, originally serving as a mill. Before that it was the sacred home of the Lenni-Lenape, the Mahicans (Mohicans) and the Iroquois.

For more than five hundred years, Indigenous communities across the Americas have demonstrated resilience and resistance in the face of violence, colonization, displacement, and genocide - all efforts to

separate them from their lands, cultures, and communities. Too often their history is erased. Today Indigenous peoples remain at the forefront of the global movement to build a just and sustainable future for our planet and all its inhabitants.

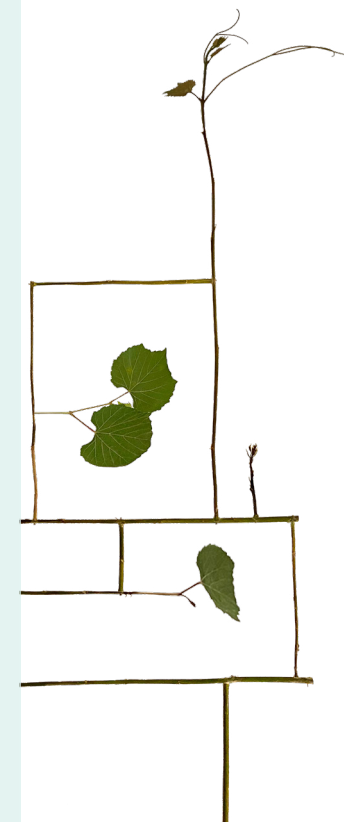
Today, we are honored to acknowledge the legacy of these first nations, offer gratitude for their enduring wisdom and commit to stand up for the restoration of justice and equity for all.

Jews have experienced exile and persecution, bigotry and violence—and while this painful history helps stir empathy with all Indigenous peoples, Jews are not indigenous to this land and therefore cannot truly understand the unique historical journey and contemporary reality of the Indigenous peoples here. What Jews—and all people—can do is authentically honor Indigenous peoples who have stewarded this land for thousands of years and express our love for and solidarity with Indigenous peoples, and our commitment to Indigenous rights and justice. With open ears and open hearts, we walk alongside our Indigenous siblings on the path ahead, committed to a better world, for all of us, for all life on earth, and for all future generations.

(Inspired by the Land Acknowledgement created by our friends at Hazon/Pearlstone)

VISUAL ART BY SHAY ARICK

Commissioned by Asylum Arts and the Jewish Arts Collaborative



"EVERY SEVEN YEARS WE HAVE THE PRECIOUS OPPORTUNITY TO TAP INTO AN INTERNAL AND ETERNAL RESERVOIR OF AGENCY. IT'S ON US AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS A COMMUNITY TO TUNE INTO THESE CYCLICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND USE THEM WISELY IF WE WISH TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE. THE YEAR OF SHMITA, RE-IMAGINED, IS OUR INVITATION TO RELEASE AND TO RENEW OUR VERY ESSENCE. TO BEGIN AGAIN."

- RABBI AMICHAH LAU-LAVIE

One day in the future we may look back and wonder: What did we learn from this pandemic? Did we use this wake up call as an opportunity to grow? Did we commit to healthier and kinder ways of human being, taking better care of ourselves and of each other? Did we do what we can to leave a world worth living in for future generations?

I'd like to believe that when those questions are asked our replies will be at least a mix of honest confirmations and hesitant shrugs. I want to plant the seeds of hopeful change - right now, today, as this new year begins, with all the turmoil and uncertainty, and with the gifts of hopeful fresh beginnings.

This coming year is the year of Shmita, the seventh in the cycle of the Jewish calendar, reminding us, just like each weekly Sabbath, to honor more than our need and greed. This is the year that calls on us to pause, so we can breathe, and be, and do - better.

The Shmita year, originally designed as an agricultural and socio-economic sabbatical for the land of Israel and its people, offers modern society worldwide a radical model for rest and reset, ways to overcome gaps of prosperity, to maximise accountability and responsibility to each other, to inspire lifelong commitment to care for our shared earth. We are called to rise to our roles as co-creators of a healthy, healing ecosystem of sacred, sustainable and systemic love and justice.

It's a year for us to grieve, to grow, to rest and release some of what we are holding on to - so that we can start again, better.

This Shmita year is an even larger opportunity, once in a lifetime. In response to the Pandemic, grounded by generations-old indigenous Jewish wisdom and bold new innovative thinking, this Sabbatical year offers us as individuals and communities much needed opportunities for reflection, repair, release and renewal.

Can we rise to the challenge? I am excited to begin this year together, to explore all year long what healing looks like, what happens when we plant seeds of change - and let them grow.

Shana Tova: Let this be a year of healing and hope, release and repair.

Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie



Dear Lab/Shul,

"Discovering art is the equivalent of a spiritual experience."

These are the words of my late friend, Barbara Hunt McLanahan, z"l, the former executive director of the Children's Museum of the Arts in Manhattan and a respected visionary in the world of arts administration. The world lost Barbara too soon, but she left a tremendous impression on me as an artist, educator and leader.

In the face of tragedy and despair, art is where we often turn, as creators and appreciators. In art, we grapple with the uncertain; we understand others' perspectives of the world; and we find comfort and acceptance. It's where we turn when we don't know what else to do.

At a time when we are experiencing what is arguably the most profound moment of uncertainty in our collective history, I am thrilled to present to you Lab/Shul's third edition of our Visionary Art Magazine as a supplement and guide for your practice of RE:LEASE this year. In addition to contributions of poetry, photography, visual art and visionary thought, we have included digital offerings with clickable hyperlinks to interactive experiences of meditation, somatic practice, music, and other spiritual journeys connected to our RE:LEASE theme this year. These gifts of inspiration come from a cross-section of artists from within the Lab/Shul community and from friends in our extended artist networks.

Barbara McLanahan espoused that in art there are no wrong answers. At a time when so much is uncertain, I believe this to be one of life's greatest truths.

Shana Tova,
Sarah Sokolic
Co-Founder & Executive Director

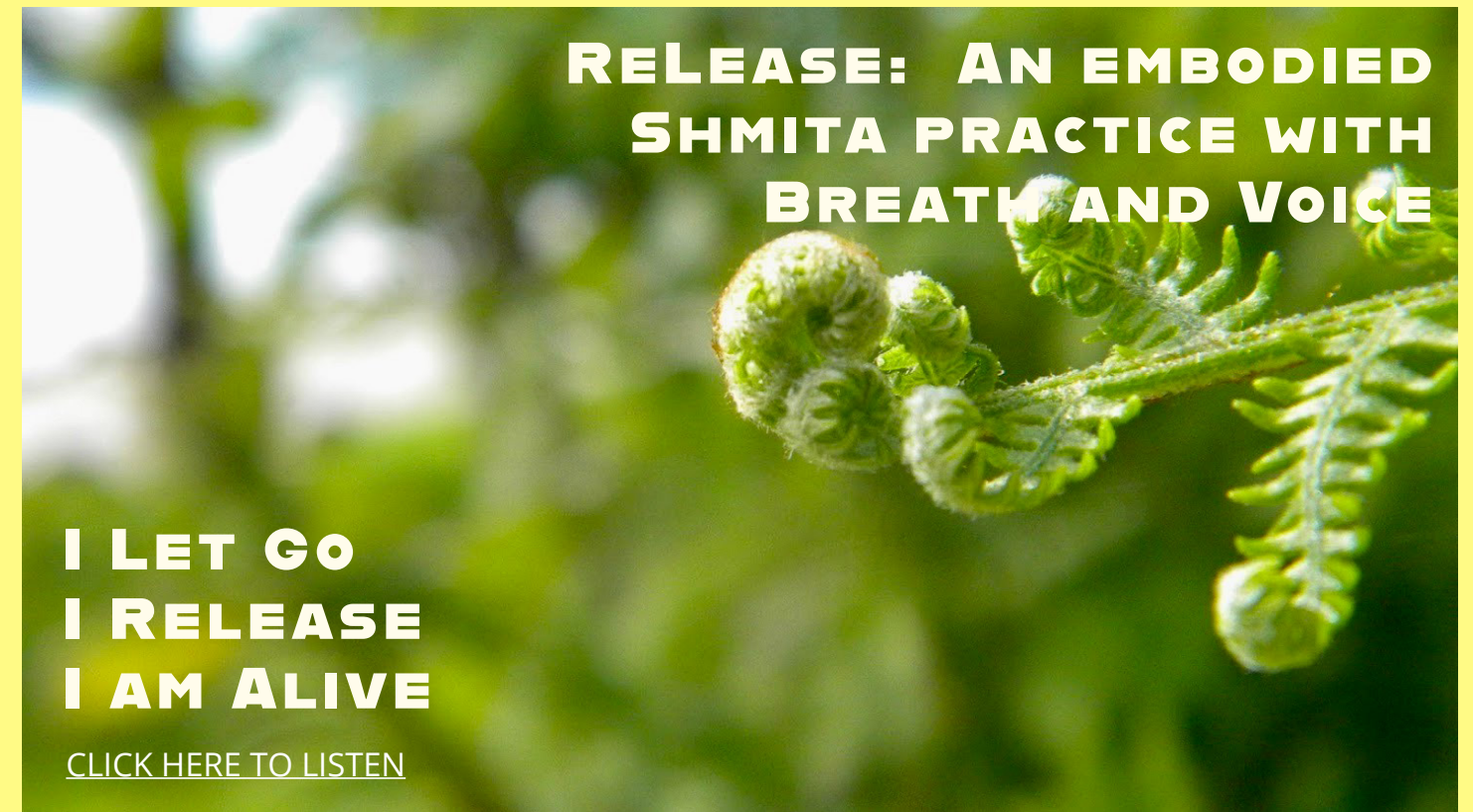


BODY

“ The impulse towards growth and self-realization needs space to come to fruition. We need to stop and shake off the bedlam of daily lives. ”

Rabbi A. Y. Kook, Sabbath of the Earth

Photo credit Matthew Heeley



**RELEASE: AN EMBODIED
SHMITA PRACTICE WITH
BREATH AND VOICE**

**I LET GO
I RELEASE
I AM ALIVE**

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

BY REBEKKA GOLDSMITH

"FOR US TODAY, THE SHMITA CYCLE CAN TAKE SHAPE AS A STORY OF TRANSITION, FROM THE ISOLATED SELF TOWARDS HOLISTIC COMMUNITY; FROM PERCEIVED SCARCITY TOWARDS REVEALED ABUNDANCE. IT IS A STORY SO OLD AND ANCIENT THAT WE HAVE FORGOTTEN JUST HOW MUCH WE NEED IT TODAY, NOW, FOR OUR OWN SURVIVAL, FOR OUR OWN EVOLUTION AND GROWTH."

YIGAL DEUTSCHER, ENVISIONING SABBATICAL CULTURE



BY ORA RAMAT

One of my students said, “Yoga is a release of conscious thought. Yoga is about turning inward.”

When I teach my students or do my own practice the release begins with the first breath. Seated and still I sense a letting go, a surrender. I allow the breath to guide me.

Focusing on breathing quiets the conscious mind. Each breath washes away tension. The healing begins. Each breath can release energetic blockages that begin to melt away. Allowing your body to become a clear channel of healing. Connecting to Prana (the collective life force in Sanskrit). To vibrate

within you. When we exhale the sense of Re Lease is palpable.

The delicate dance of connecting movement to breath with each Yoga pose allows one to go deeper into physical and spiritual healing.

One of my yoga teachers once said, “Your yoga practice is a chance to bring heaven to earth.”

As we celebrate Rosh Hashanah this year, may we all create opportunities for ourselves in yoga and in your lives in the RE LEASE with each breath to live and be on this earth in a heavenly state.

TURD AS OLD AS TIME

BY SHAWN SHAFNER

Our modern lives have obscured the important role that poop plays in our ecosystem. However, various cultures throughout history and around the world have understood this relationship. They’ve even told creation myths that recognize poop’s contribution as a foundational building block of existence. The Kokori people of India tell tales of how our earth was pooped out by a worm. The Chukchee Eskimo describe how the life emerged from Raven’s droppings as he flew across the sky. In Tanzania, the Wapangwa explain how ants devoured their own dung pile and pooped it out again, slowly building the mound we live on. Even Abrahamic religions may reference our excremental origins. The first person is created from the earth—in Hebrew, adamah—which lends its name to the earthling Adam. From the dust we come, and to the dust we go. Give us this day our daily whole grain bread that this, too, shall pass easily.

Now let’s leave the spiritual realm, and descend to the corporeal. [It’s time to talk shit.](#)

People have been pooping ever since they emerged on the planet. In fact, poop may be as old as the planet itself. Dinosaurs pooped; we have their fossilized turds, or coprolites, to prove it. Well before reptiles had evolved their digestive tract, however, single-celled organisms were happily eating and crapping from the same hole. In other words, poop is even older than buttholes. And every living creature today—plants, mammals, even some of those same ancient bacteria—live in a cycle of give and take with their ecosystem. Nutrients enter the organism, are processed and integrated, and a byproduct comes back out.

Here is where things get really exciting: what looks like poop to one regurgitating, single-celled organism looks like gourmet chow to the next one in line. The earth’s ecosystems rely on this nutrient recycling, as food becomes poop and poop becomes food. The amount of whale feces in the ocean, for example, directly correlates to the health of the entire aquatic food web. That’s because phytoplankton feed on all that Moby Dung, which in turn feeds the rest of the ocean—including krill, the whale’s

favorite food. The whole world follows this model of a self-replenishing banquet, all of us connected in cycles of consumption and production.

We humans often feel removed from this process. We certainly don’t think of ourselves as eating poop, and a bunch of hungry bugs and microorganisms feasting on our poop is truly the stuff of nightmares. But that is actually what’s happening in a septic tank, wastewater treatment plant, or hole in the woods. Poop goes in, organisms eat it, and they poop out fertilizer or become it themselves. The same is true for animal dung, as insects and bacteria transform that shit into the black gold farmers call “manure.” Follow your food back to its origins, and there’s always poop in there somewhere. In that way, it’s kind of like magic. Like a virtuous human centipede filled with happy farm creatures.

Don’t get me wrong: we don’t eat straight poop. Nor should we, because it would make us very sick. Let’s be clear: DON’T EAT POOP.

And yet, the fact is that we sort of eat poop all of the time. This might seem surprising because most food, like an apple, or a steak, is definitely not poop, right? But speaking broadly, much of what we eat sits somewhere along the food-to-poop-to-food pipeline. Trees expel some of their wastes into fruits and nuts. Meat may contain hormones and bodily acids left over from processes interrupted at the moment of slaughter. Some foods put us even closer to the receiving end of another being’s output. The delicious squish of a good bread comes from air pockets created by yeast tooting into the dough. When that yeast’s cousin feeds on sugary water, it pees out that expensive bottle of wine, craft IPA, or dry martini. Fermented foods like pickles, yogurt and, to some degree, even coffee all follow this model: your dinner bowl is bacteria’s toilet bowl. And that’s just the cycle of life—dust to dust. L’chaim!

By Shawn Shafner, adapted from the forthcoming book [Know Your Shit: What Your Crap is Telling You](#), published by Cider Mill Press. Look for it on shelves Feb. 15, 2022.

KUGELS AND CLEANSES: EATING "HEALTHIER" IN THE NEW YEAR

BY LIZ ALPERN

For the past decade, I've been traveling the world cooking, teaching and writing about traditional Ashkenazi (Central and Eastern European) Jewish cuisine. I've given lectures on schmaltz. I've prepared giant meals featuring locally raised goose. I've taught the art of pickling in parks, on rooftops and of course, on Zoom. And every single time I'm in front of an audience, two topics come up like clockwork:

First, there's the person who tells me how unhealthy Ashkenazi cuisine is. They'll tell me that schmaltz (rendered poultry fat) clogs your arteries and that kugels, briskets and latkes cannot possibly be part of a balanced diet.

Second, there's the person who reiterates the above point about how unhealthy the food is and then proceeds to wax poetic about how their mother made the absolute best version of [insert dish] and how they long to eat it again and could I please describe in more detail about my own recipe for brisket?

I welcome this commentary, this paradox, with lightheartedness and a smile. I joyfully explain that traditional Ashkenazi cuisine was much "healthier" before it left the Old World. My particular ancestors had no choice but to eat seasonally and consume a mostly vegetarian diet.

So as we arrive at these Days of Awe, a time when I look to restart and RE:LEASE, how can these questions and lessons inform whatever cleanses

or dietary resolutions I might be making in order to give my body a chance to refresh?

First, I release myself from the idea that "healthy" is a static concept. In fact, healthy is a dynamic and ever-changing ideal, influenced by my particular context and needs combined with the latest science and Instagram ads. Animal fats like schmaltz, for example, have gone from being perceived as public enemy number one (replaced by synthetic fats like margarine in the 80s) to celebrated unprocessed food hero today (schmaltz potato chips anyone?). Accepting and even embracing that what is good for me will likely change over my lifetime gives me the chance to be kinder and more loving toward myself as I attempt to eat better.

Second, despite what I think is best for me, I'll always be drawn to foods that bring me comfort. At least twice a year, I carve out sacred space to enjoy a giant pastrami sandwich from Katz's Deli. It's definitely good for me. Not so much an indulgence (that sounds too guilty) as a chance to reconnect, on a physical level, with my grandfather and great grandfather.

And so, as I consider what exactly I want to do differently, or eat differently, in 5782, I'll probably keep it simple, based on the wisdom of my ancestors and what I know in my gut to be true (literally): more fermented foods, less sugar, figuring out a way to eat breakfast and lunch more regularly. Much like a balanced diet, I know that the way I eat is only one of the ways to RE:LEASE.



Photo credit: Lauren Volo



"IN OUR IMAGE, IN OUR LIKENESS"

**DOCUMENTARY PROJECT
BY PHOTOGRAPHER GILAD BAR-SHALEV**

Gilad Bar Shalev, an Israeli documentary photographer, came to the US to start a long term project about the state of contemporary American Jewry. As part of his series he photographed Lab/Shul's Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie, as well as Phil Cohen, aka "Goldie."

"My goal is to document unique stories and interesting people in Jewish communities across the US, to create a cultural testimony."

HOME LAND

“ Pushing into perennial Shmita culture is counter-cultural. It looks like caring for self, for community (both “our people” and others), for nature. It looks like balancing the act of taking and holding so that instead of hoarding resources from a place of fear, mistrust, and anxiety, we’re recalibrating to take only what we need. It requires trust and a collective mindset, knowing that in fact we have everything we need for all people to thrive — but the distribution is horribly inequitable.

..It means rethinking our relationship to land, ownership, and colonialism. Dedicated time, resource, and energy towards restoring the relationships between indigenous communities and the lands that have been stolen from them; and the same towards racial justice for those who were stolen from their land, whose bodies were enslaved and traumatized generation after generation.

Yes, Shmita is about rest and release. We are all exhausted.
We all deserve a break.

And, let those of us for whom it applies be careful not to allow ourselves to slip into the apathy of the privileged.
Shmita is at least as much about restoration and healing as it is about rest. ”

Yoshi Silverstein,
Shmita Culture & Releasing Ourselves From Urgency

A LETTER FROM REV DERRICK MCQUEEN

Here we are again, celebrating a new Jewish year, together.

Over the past year, Rabbi Amichai and I, along with a wonderful group from our two communities, embarked on an even deeper journey “From Separation to Reparation” - the conversation we began last year, during the Days of Awe, as we led an eight-week deeply engaging course on the topic. It was enlightening, at times painful, offering us honest ways to address race and injustice. We dug deeper, continuing for six more months with a wonderful and committed group, focusing on Howard Thurman’s “Jesus and the Disinherited” book as our core text. Howard Thurman was an African American mystic and theologian who is said to have inspired the work of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with this book.

How does Thurman’s profound book help us dig deeper and rise higher in the context of both reparations work and preparation for this new Shmita year or release? More than just allegory, Shmita speaks to a divine call for human repair—moving from separation to reparation.

Reparations in the United States have a history from as far back as 1783, when a former slave was offered a pension upon her release. The most prevalent understanding of reparations for African Americans was the “40 Acres and a Mule” promised to former

slaves after the Civil War. This promise, never realized, is the first obvious systemic failure that stole the opportunity for generational wealth from African Americans held in bondage. To better understand the historical depth of how this became ingrained in the systems of the United States, we added another book to our reading of Thurman, the highly recommended “From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century.”

This work is more than just about economic reparations for Black Americans. Rabbi Amichai and I have spent hours discerning the connection between separation to reparation and the themes we are holding as a community during this year of Shmita.

- Land Justice
- Call for Reparations
- Leaning into Love
- Rising into Repair

Land Justice—the land bears the scars of our human injustice. She deserves the rest and the healing of this year, perhaps more than we do. While she rests, we are called to return the lands to those who have been systematically and economically not afforded the chance to claim the nation’s land as was the holy promise for all. In our work of American reparations, that looks like what occurred in Evanston, IL, where the city council approved the Local Reparations Restorative Housing Program to correct “discriminatory housing policies and practices and inaction

on the city’s part.” This program, in part, begins to repair the housing crisis caused by these policies.

Call for Reparations—it is imperative to write upon the law of our hearts a call to repair the ills we have caused or those from which we have benefitted. Many of us learned for the first time or said, “finally,” when we saw the powerful remembering of the Massacre in Tulsa, OK, this year. What a powerful reminder that our hearts, minds, and spirits must be mindful of the hidden traumas around us. We may ask, “How did we take part in the call for reparations with the commemoration in Tulsa?” We were witnesses! For one hundred years, a community’s devastation was ignored, swept under the rug, and hidden away in the annals of history. As witnesses, we helped repair a community psyche and reclamation of its glory and not its defeat. In that model of call for reparations, we wept in our shame of ignorance, but we moved through it to be a part of the change. Calling for reparations also means moving through our issues around topics and our defense mechanisms to be still able to call for repair. We also emphasize that, like Shmita, the pandemic caused many of us to be still this year. We were able to share in the memory of Tulsa because we were made to sit, surrender, and learn.

Leaning into Love—this may seem like familiar territory for us, to speak of love. Love is, after all, a common spiritual aspiration. When we speak of healing, separation, repair, and social justice, “love” is spoken of freely. Love is not simply an ideal, an umbrella under which we gather to move forward in action. We must lean into the specific notion of love, loyalty to humanity

that inspires merciful and compassionate behavior towards those in need of healing, repair, and justice. This phrase, “leaning into love,” is to help us understand that love is never simply an emotion but is action. If we all can commit to lean together, it is in this way that barriers are moved and pathways cleared.

Rising into Repair—Each year, we start these Days of Awe by gathering in solemnity on the fast day of the Ninth of Av. We honor all that the day encompasses in our lamentation. It is a powerful and spiritually draining day of recognition. **My Aunt Dot used to say, “There will be times when you are so down that the only thing you can do is look upward. That is the time when you know that there is no place to go but up. And that is when you know you have a chance to do something new, something better.”** And so, on the Ninth of Av, we begin these Days of Awe as we gather to rise from the rubble. We rise into repair, not just to repair. We rise to repair our community, ourselves, to claim our healing. Then we can see the opportunities to work to make things better than they were. We don’t ignore our brokenness; we pour gold into our cracks to become stronger and more beautiful in all our doings.

This year, together again, we hope to bring this into being as we gather for these holy days. We will discuss, sing, and move through rituals to understand Shmita, a New Year, our Atonement will resonate throughout our being. May we sit in awe of what will be wrought. And may we rise.

SIGNS OF HOPE

BY ILANA BOSS

Signs of Hope came into being as a spontaneous and urgent act. A response to the never-ending gaslighting by former president Trump and his right-wing media megaphone.

Relatively early in the Trump administration, a psychoanalyst coined the term “reality fatigue”. This term captured the phenomenon of what it is to be a sane person trying to recover on the daily from assaults to one’s operational reality.

Working to restore a sense of reality when every day is “opposite day” was exhausting. On social media I felt my voice was one of millions echoing in a dark tunnel, no light in sight. As a clinician, I saw and read about a secondary epidemic - a nationwide mental health crisis, and I admit that my own sense of despair was increasing. To cope, I began making signs for myself and a countdown calendar to the Inauguration.

On November 12th, 2020, I felt compelled to post my signs in public at the end of my driveway. Every night when I crossed out another day, I was relieved to be one day closer to January 20th. There were many times I wondered if we would make it.

The idea of a daily sign was an attempt to spread hope and reinforce my belief that goodness would, in the end, prevail.

Once, I came out a bit later than usual to a neighbor who I didn’t know. She told me that she was waiting for me because every morning she sent a photo of my sign to her daughter in NYC who, she said, would then pass it on to all of her colleagues in the hospital COVID unit where she worked. Someone left a bouquet of flowers and several times I found thank you notes. Beautifully painted rocks began to appear.

Many times, I left information with ways to take concrete action, such as writing letters to stay the execution of Brandon Bernard. Other times I left gifts such as peace cranes when sadly he was executed. I invited passersby to write their vision for our country’s future. Even the Amazon driver and postal worker participated!

Though reality has been restored to a workable level, there is as much work to be done now as there was before the 2020 election. May these timeless Signs of Hope inspire you to share your hope with the world if you aren’t already. Whether speaking out, standing up, educating, engaging in electoral and social policy or however your love for humanity calls to you.

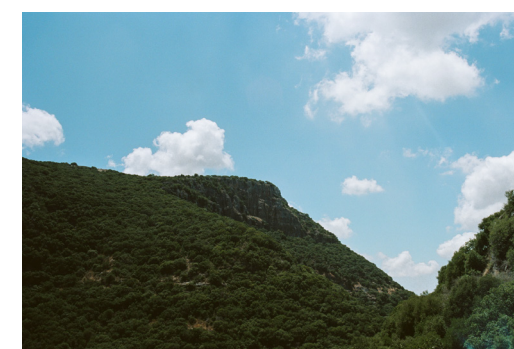
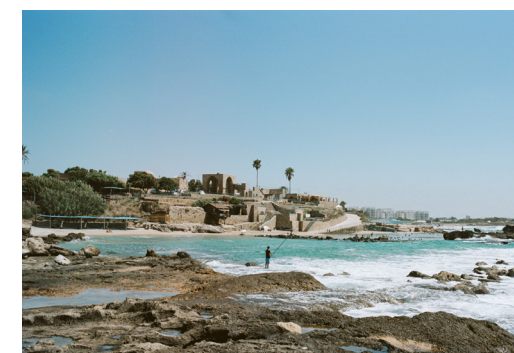
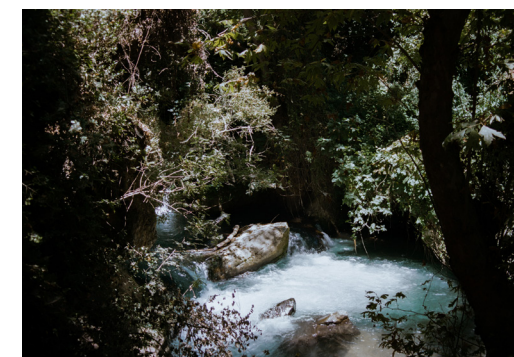
For hope and action are the two wings of justice.



HOLY LAND

“...What we learn from Shmita is that open fences make good neighbors, and that resting means living in peace, with brothers and sisters, cousins and strangers, humans and animals, and with the holy land. And those who cannot recognize this will never taste what it means to call the land holy.”

Rabbi David Seidenberg



A Land, Holy:
Light and Dark.

Far from Fantasy:
A Lived Reality.
Unceded in Cycles.

X LOUIEFROMTHEBLOCK

"THE STIRRINGS IN ISRAEL AND THE JEWISH WORLD AROUND A BROADENING AND UNIVERSALIZATION OF SHMITA AND ITS MEANING INDICATE THAT THE TIME HAS PERHAPS COME IN WHICH, LIKE THE SABBATH, THE MESSAGE OF SHMITA CAN BE HEARD BY A HUMANITY THIRSTY FOR A WAY FORWARD TOWARDS A MORE JUST, BEAUTIFUL AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD. IF WE CAN ARTICULATE THIS MESSAGE IN CONTEMPORARY TERMS, THE JEWISH PEOPLE MAY ONCE AGAIN MAKE AN ENORMOUS CONTRIBUTION TO A GLOBAL CULTURE PROFOUNDLY IN NEED OF GUIDANCE, MEANING, AND A UNIFYING ETHICS."

MICHA ODENHEIMER



EAST JERUSALEM – WEST JERUSALEM

BY DAVID BROZA, WYCLEF JEAN

Same face in the Gaza
Is the same face I see out in California
Same face in Jericho
Is the same face I see down in Mexico
Same face in Tel Aviv
Is the same face I see out in New Jersey

So many places
All share the same faces
East Jerusalem, West Jerusalem
Shalom, Salam
East Jerusalem, West Jerusalem
Shalom, Salam

Same face in the Haifa
Is the same face out in Nevada
Same face in Nablus
Is the same face out in New Orleans singing the Blues
Same face in London town
Same face out in Kingston town

Feet in the sand, eyes in the sky, ears to the wall
Say, wondering if change ever come along
Spread a little love in the morning
Spread a little love in the evening
Spread a little love before you put your head down
Maybe when you wake up
The world will be a better place

East Jerusalem, West Jerusalem
Shalom, Salam

“What is it that this city has that has brought the three monotheistic religions inside those walls? As long as monotheism has existed it has evolved and yet nothing has changed.”

-David Broza in the Vanity Fair article “David Broza: What’s So Funny ‘Bout Peace, Love, and Understanding in Jerusalem?” by Jordan Hoffman, published February 6, 2015

"THE STRANGER" POEM

BY JON ADAM ROSS

Some see trees of green and clouds of white
But they'll never know my specific plight
As a sold off daughter and a cast off slave
Escorting my baby to his premature grave

I'm trying to keep from eyes that are prying
Don't want to let the sun catch me crying
There's no time or place for my own self pity
I'm still young and healthy and fertile and pretty

Hello! Do you see it? My shell so pure and soul
ripped apart?
I've seen a lot of beautiful things with a heavy heart
Like the handshake of peace between my father
and he
That turned me into a mistress to be

Or a beautiful sunrise turning quickly to hard rain
Loud enough to hide the wails of my pain as I
birthed my boy,
Well, their boy, really
Whom she would've loved to carry, ideally

But she couldn't, so I was their vessel of hope
And now I'm just left with the need to cope
With the horror that comes from just one look
To see what, from me, these monsters took

I can see clearly now the rain is gone
I can see clearly now just what you have done
To my son and to yours, it's clear as daylight
That selfishness overrides any sense of what's right

Hello! Do you see it? Will you open your eyes?
I know what it's like to hide my sighs in the dark
With my face turned away from the truth
Even to mention this would be uncouth

But his hunger, his fear, it's palpable, real
So strong, in fact, that I can feel it in my chest
And the rest of my body starts shaking
As I offer my boy's soul up for the taking

To eternal rest, if that even exists
And my body turns around,
walks away and twists one last time
To see a glance of the boy I love
As his soul departs for the world above

See you sometime, my sweet
I will miss your heartbeat when you lie by my side
And my pride is now puddled at the feet of
this tree
Because I don't have the courage to
look up and see

Hello! Do you see it? Are you looking away
You can try that, ignore, tell the world
that you pray
Every day for good things for good people
Hiding your eyes behind walls and a steeple

But the sun will come out, and the
spotlights turn on
And you can't avoid but see what's beyond
The wall that you've built and named "my naive"te"
And you know that 'aha' is gonna come today

Hear that? See that? You know how I know?
Because if your wall was still up, my voice
wouldn't be so loud in your ear
With a message, a clarion call on your bullshit
That it's time for you to quit lying to
yourself about the world

See that boy, that son of a mother, lying dead
Don't look away, though you want to,
don't turn your head
Pay attention! See his face. Hear the sobs
of the grieving
And wake up to the moment of no
more deceiving yourself

I know because I turned to go
Don't be like me.
Do you see it? Hello!

MOTHER EARTH

But in the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath of complete rest, a sabbath of the Eternal: you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. – Leviticus 25:4

“ Shmita is the Torah’s prescription for environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Today, climate change is the biggest threat to sustainability. Although the scale of the problems brought on by climate change were unimaginable in the time of the Torah, shmita addressed certain maladies of human society that have not gone away and that now threaten us with self-destruction. As in ancient times, self-interest, greed, short-term thinking, and unsustainable exploitation of people and the earth endanger our existence. Climate change is not a scientific or technical problem. The science is clear and the solutions are ready; it is an ethical problem. Will we, who have benefited from the burning of fossil fuels, take responsibility for the damage and make it right?

The Torah’s wisdom is timeless. And human beings rise to the occasion when we are saddled with an intractable deadline. That’s why we need shmita. ”

Mirele B. Goldsmith
Stop Now! Shmita and Climate Change

FORK THIS YEAR: A ZERO-WASTER'S CHALLENGE FOR THE YEAR 5782

BY AMANDA LINDNER

If you were to ever visit my home, there is one thing missing that you might find odd. I don’t own a trash can – and I haven’t for more than three years. I live a zero-waste lifestyle – or as close to it as possible. The majority of my trash for the past three-and-a-half years still fits inside of a one-quart mason jar.

I have no grand illusions that a single person can stop the fossil fuel industry, the continuous building of pipelines, fracking, or even force the richest companies to pay their fair share in the environmental harm they cause. But I do know one thing that every single human being can do to have an enormous impact – and that is to change ourselves. Because if we want to repair the world, we have to repair our habits.

I want to offer you one small zero-waste challenge as we enter the year 5782. I want you to **Fork This Year**. Yep, fork it.

Start with one small thing you know you can do on a consistent basis to lower your waste and carbon footprint: bring your own fork with you in a bag, pocket, or backpack – the same way one would carry a phone or a pen with them. This way, there is never a need for a plastic, disposable, single-use fork.

What can one fork do? Think about the fact that the creation of a single plastic fork re-

quires us to drill miles underground to extract petroleum, then ship that petroleum to a refinery, mold it into its shape, shipped again on trucks, planes, shipped all across the world, then placed in restaurants, cafeterias, schools, businesses, homes – only to be used for an average of 11 minutes and then tossed out and placed in a landfill for the next 500 years. Not to mention, 40 billion plastic utensils are tossed every year in the U.S.

With this in mind, simply bringing our own utensils seems pretty forking fantastic. More so, it’s one small step you can take to give you a sense of pride, and a sense of hope, that you are capable of creating your own future on this planet.

Perhaps later on, you will also use that fork to choose a plant-based meal over an animal-based meal. Or, maybe you will have that fork in your bag on your way to a climate rally or a meeting with a representative to advocate for environmental justice and a livable future on this planet.

We don’t live in a zero-waste world and there is no such thing as living perfectly without waste, but when given the choice on any given day to cause the most environmental harm or the least, I hope all of us in the year 5782 are choosing the latter. **Your challenge is on. This Shmita year, just fork it.**

MASTER OF RETURN

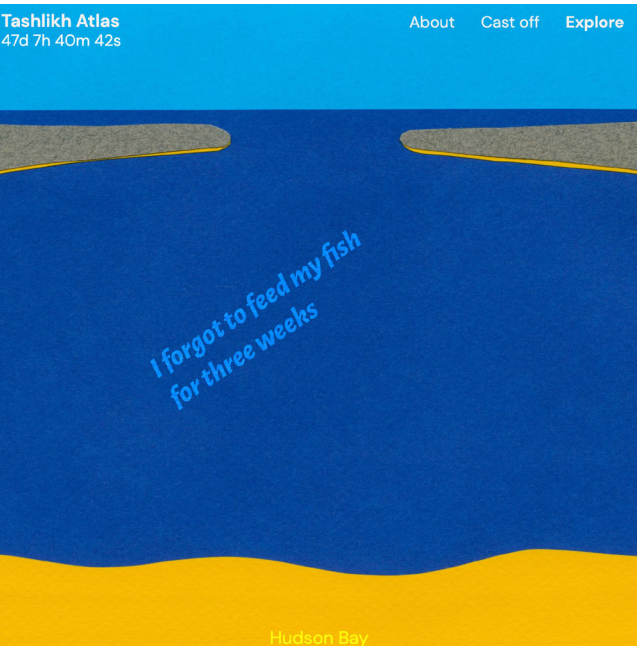
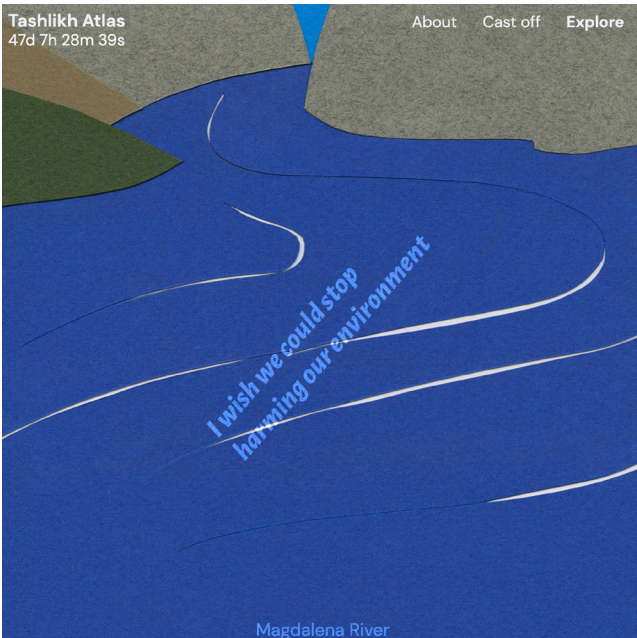
BY JAKE MARMER

I didn't wake up one morning with light in my mouth.
There was no smoking wreckage, no promise,
no big moment to tell my children about.
I remember learning that I've become a Master of Return.
Remember the pleasure of drowning
in the language I didn't understand
but could read, watching my thoughts released
into a more pure, sonic self. I felt God was hearing –
did I really believe or simply set my thoughts
upwards?
It didn't matter that I was returning
to a past
wholly imagined,
A life I have not lived.
Myth and autobiography overlap
extemporaneously.
All reasons & explanations
come back to loneliness –
and I don't mean the lack
of companionship but the other kind – music
is how this loneliness gets across. Mind turns fire.
When the feeling left me it left me empty though
the reward for keeping the laws

was the sweetness of release –

In all of these years, never
have I come closer to the point of my original turning,
to total undoing of it all
than I am today –
I've been erasing my way
back to my origins: am I not, then, still
a Master of Return?

Commissioned by Asylum Arts and the Jewish Arts Collaborative.



TASHLIKH ATLAS

תשליך אטלס

CREATED BY EFRAT AND SHABTAI

In Tashlich Atlas, visitors are encouraged to reflect on the things they wish to let go of for the new year, both personally and socially. Head to the website tashlikhatlas.com, and the website will determine your geographic location and you can cast off a short text to a nearby body of water. Visitors can explore bodies of water around the world to see all contributions. The accumulated content will be viewable online through the end of Sukkot and will then be washed away, for a better year to come.

Commissioned by Asylum Arts and the Jewish Arts Collaborative.



BY REBECCA KELLEY

I was intrigued by Rabbi Amichai and Jaqueline Nicholls’ collaborative journey with online drawings of flowers and reflections during the month of Elul. Would children enjoy flower study? They drew flowers from direct observation. They made simple origami cups to hold their drawn and cut out flowers. It was their favorite activity in a week-long art camp for homeschooled students.



BY STEPHANIE GUEDALIA

Plastic Bark
Collage, Found images of nature and white barbie legs.

Our Tree Goddess, rebranded for worship by the white supremacist patriarchal crudely photo-shopped perfectionist backdrop of our world.

May the Tree of All Our Lives shake Her Branches and Release the artifice, the plastic, the pollution of domination culture.

REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE & ROCK! [THE STORY OF OUR TRASH AND WHAT WE CAN DO WITH IT.]

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY AVI FOX-ROSEN, L. FRISARI, SHIRA KLINE

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GGGGGGG-Garbage! GGGGGG-Go away!
GGGGGGG-Garbage! How do we make it go away?

Reduce Reuse Recycle & Rock! x3

GGGGGGG-Garbage! GGGGGG-Go away!
GGGGGGG-Garbage! How do we make it go away?

Where on earth is “away” anyway?

Should we throw it in the ocean! NO! The fish will die.
Should we throw it in the forest? NO! The trees will cry.
Should we throw it on the street? NO! That’s where we live.
Should we throw it in a hole? The world’s just not that big!

Reduce Reuse Recycle & Rock! x3

GGGGGGG-Garbage! You can never really throw it away.
GGGGGGG-Garbage! No matter what you do its here to stay,

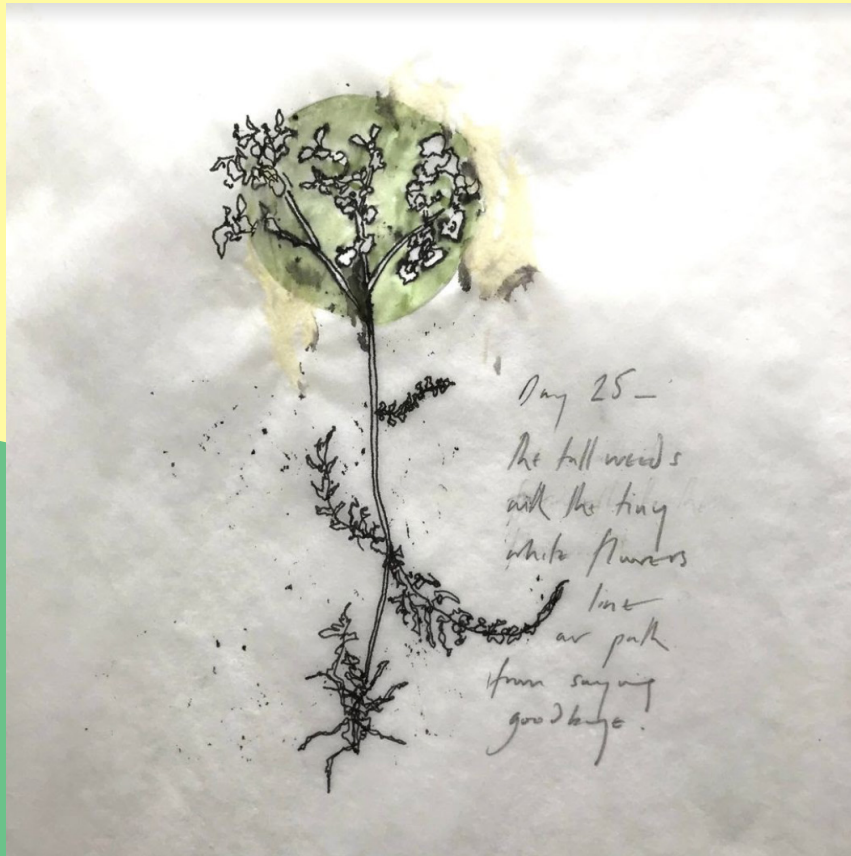
So I say,
What do you say LaLa?

Re-duce, Yes! We just use less!
Re-use Yes! You know it’s the best!
You change it, you treat it, you do what you must,
you mash it, you melt it, you make new stuff!
Recycle re-uses, re-uses reduces
Reducing makes me happy and it makes me wanna rock!

Reduce Reuse Recycle & Rock! x3

Take your water from home in a handy dandy mug.
Use the backside of the paper and give the tree a hug.
Bring your own bags when you go to the store.
And always remember less is more!

Reduce Reuse Recycle & Rock! x3



What is more important - the weeds in the yard or the roses I planted? The yard? Me?

We are taught that it's about us and our needs. We prioritize ourselves beyond others. Human. Male. White. Western Supremacy. To list a few of the hierarchies our culture and species has cultivated carefully, like roses.

When in reality, we are all and it is all important and co-dependent. The Shmita year demands that we decenter the human to widen the lens of priorities.

We are invited to decenter our own agency.
To rely on others and to ask for help.

To decenter ego. To put earth first, human need and greed second. To celebrate the weeds as much as the roses, and to learn again how to stop running for gain and to gain from pausing. Today I focus on the need to really decenter the human, to relearn the beauty of what's all around me not as scenery that's waiting for my eye or hand to appreciate and improve but as the show as is, in which I am so privileged to be just one more moving prop, perhaps at times a star attraction.

How will you get ready today and in the days ahead for the year of releasing human supremacy so that our world can get another chance?

RECEDE/PREPENT is an artistic collaboration between Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie & artist Jacqueline Nicholls offering a virtual Elul journey, with 30 daily online drawings and reflections to help us discard and declutter, recharge and refocus our lives, into the new Jewish year.