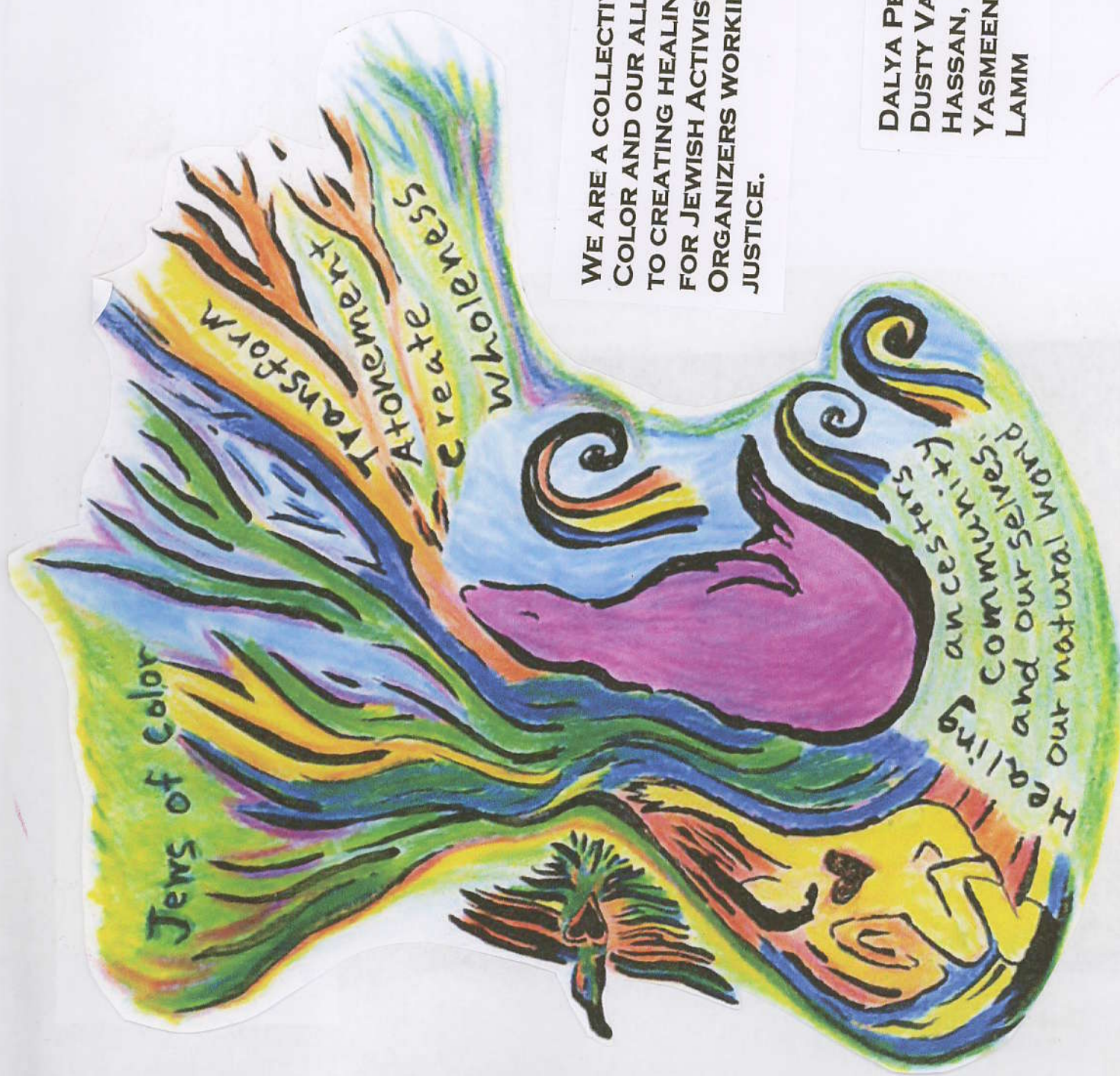


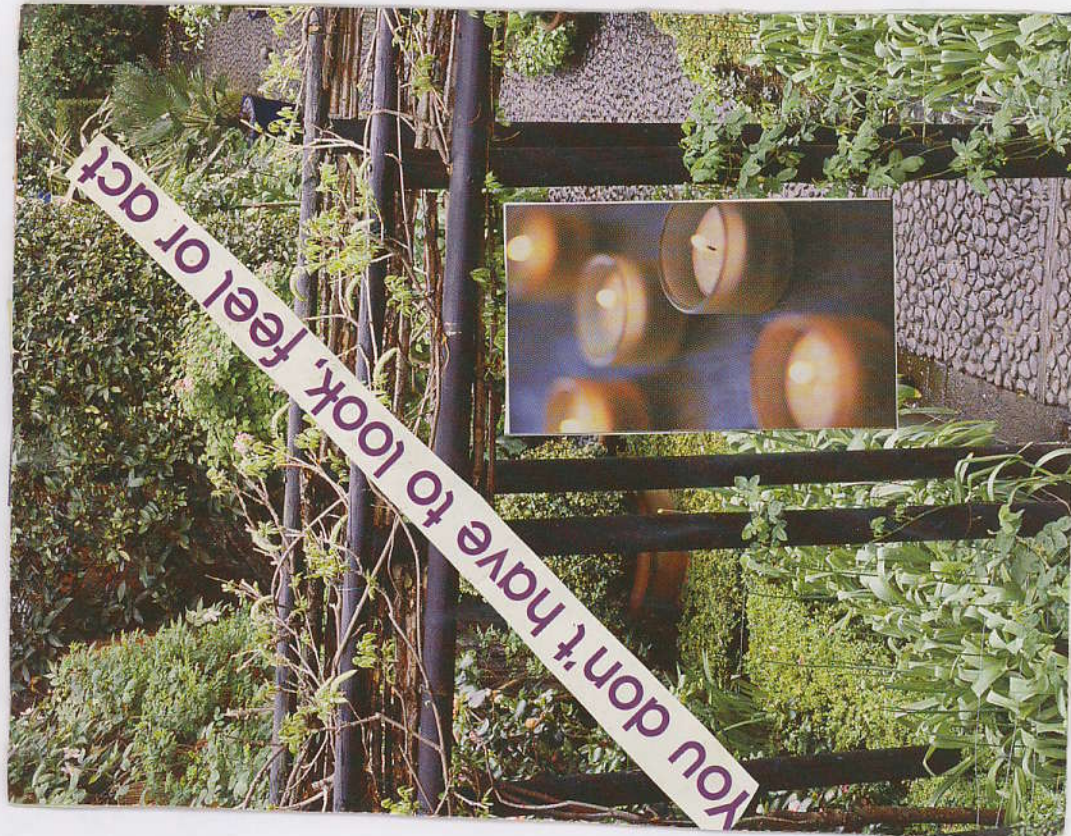


WE ARE A COLLECTIVE OF JEWISH PEOPLE OF COLOR AND OUR ALLIES WHO ARE COMMITTED TO CREATING HEALING SPACE AND COMMUNITY FOR JEWISH ACTIVISTS, ARTISTS AND ORGANIZERS WORKING FOR RADICAL SOCIAL JUSTICE.

DALYA PEREZ, CELESTE CHAN,
DUSTY VALENTINE, SHIRA
HASSAN, LAURA MINTZ,
YASMEEN PEREZ AND NOMY
LAMM

Where we come from in our revolution is not about knowing right or wrong, its about humbling yourself to a place where it can all come undone. Liberation is a deep process that happens from the underside up. Its magic, or spirit, or something honoring what grows from the decay of our process. We welcome our shamed parts and our shadow parts and all other parts- we make room for all of it.

It is customary to fast, not drink or drug, not have sex, not brush your teeth on Yom Kippur. This is to remove the earthly from us and focus on accessing our inner holiness. Today we ask for a space to collectively heal, rebel, cherish and recreate queer Jewish people of color community. We wanted to create a space that rather than acknowledging atonement- focuses on taking personal responsibility and asking for the strength to reclaim and reinvent the possibilities of our collective cultures.



In 2003, the first radical queer Yom Kippur observance went off in Chicago drawing over 40 radical Jewish queer activists and our allies. It grew out of a need to have space away from official religious leadership, that was truly queer positive and truly radical and led by us for us. We wanted an opportunity to learn and grow with each other and not feel like we were shoved inside a religious box with hollow process - to reclaim the rituals of Yom Kippur in a way that reflected the healing work we were trying to do in our lives.

As it evolved, it became a space for non-Jewish activists, community organizers and artists from all backgrounds to come and get some healing and reflection. With participation from more mainstream orthodox gay Jews, non-Jewish queers, non-practicing Jews and Jewish people of color, over sixty people attended during our biggest year.

This year, we have come together as a core organizing group of queer Jewish people of color, to help break the isolation and separation we feel, and to give leadership to those of us who are typically left out of Jewish mainstream leadership.

We aim to create a space to bring our whole selves and reinterpret 't'shuva' (returning) in ways that feel whole and grounded in community and connection to our ancestors. This historic and community led project will incorporate a queer reinterpretation of the rituals of Yom Kippur with an emphasis on healing, community building, and non-religious spiritual practice for artists and activists of color and our allies.

For queers, people with disabilities, people of color, women, and trans people, this means an acknowledgment of historical trauma, and deepening our commitment to the world we believe in. Strength can be drawn from seeing and knowing each other, witnessing each other's power, and being in community together.

today we reclaim our right to spiritual community!
we reclaim our right to access our tradition
in a safe space!! we claim space in our bodies
and our souls to heal and grow.

↪ all together please!

Yom Kippur Agenda for the Day

This machzor zine is intended to be used by Jews of Color and allies doing community and internal healing on this traditional Day of Atonement. Here is an outline of how the day goes:

- *Shofar – call to action to begin the day!
- *Sh'ma – contemplating oneness, bringing our voices together
- *Amidah – this is a time to write and think about the past year and the year ahead
- *Alenu – a prayer and meditation on humility, gratitude and home
- *1st Al Cheyt – asking for deep release and the strength to take responsibility for our places of judgment, unkindness, fear and restriction...
- *Avinu Malkenu – song and commentary on patriarchal god-language
- *Birkhat Cohanim – blessing over community
- *Tree of Life exercise – an opportunity to connect to body, voice, and spirit through the ancient mystical tradition of Jewish Kabbalah
- *The Thirteen Attributes (Adonai Adonai) – prayer from the Torah
- *Torah – commentary on Isaiah, true fasting, and channeling healing
- *2nd Al Cheyt – same structure (refer to earlier in the zine), write more of your own
- *Unatana Tokef – rethinking god's smites, reclaiming power

*Yizkor – mourner's kaddish, Israel/Palestine

*3rd Al Cheyt – same as above

*Closing – banishing/releasing fear, put your healing in the world

"It is part of our task as revolutionary people, people who want deep-rooted, radical change, to be as whole as it is possible for us to be. This can only be done if we face the reality of what oppression really means in our lives, not as abstract systems subject to analysis, but as an avalanche of traumas leaving a wake of devastation in the lives of real people who nevertheless remain human, unquenchable, complex and full of possibility."

Aurora Levins Morales, Medicine Stories

Shofar

to prayer

radical
hippies, queer Jews, callin'

HEAR ME!

hear my call
for community,
for prayer.

WAKE UP!
time to take a
look inside
time to LET GO
time to be

FREE to be
powerful
to grieve, to
forgive, to
be forgiven

I always wanted to blow the shofar. Listen to this

שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה
אֶחָד



Connect
with the
oneness
inside.

D.P

The Sh'ma is a prayer that I have been saying every night since I was little.

For me, it is less a prayer about god, and more a mantra about oneness. The kabbalists say that recognizing unity is the key to everything. The Sh'ma says we all are one, there is only oneness and you must acknowledge it. There is oneness in water, people, earth, objects, trees, staplers, etc. Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz says the Sh'ma is a statement of Jewish Survival. "Hear O Israel, all over the earth, wherever you are, Sing this, say this, we are the Jewish People." It is a call to Rise up. It is a call to unite. It is the basis of Jewish Solidarity

TODAY WHEN WE SAY THE
SH'MA SCREAM IT LIKE
IT IS A CALL TO ACTION

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֶחָד:

SH'MA - CALL TO PRAYER

Sh'ma yisrael adonai Eloheinu adonai echod
Hear oh Israel the lord our God the lord is One

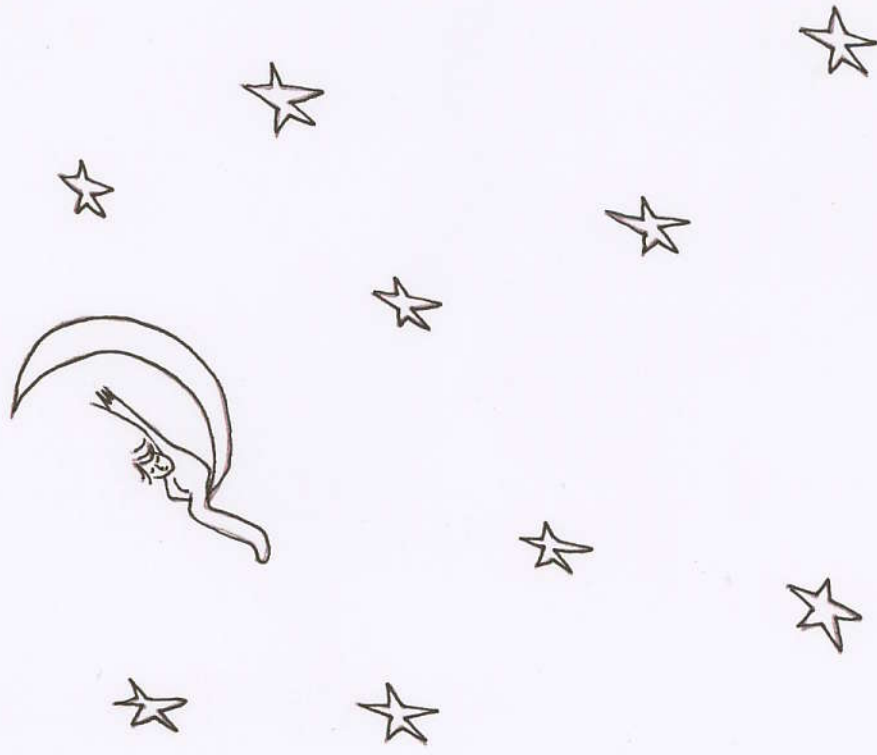
Baruch shem kevod mal'chut lekolam va-ed
Blessed is your name forever and ever

TSHUVAH IS THE INTERVAL
PSYCHODYNAMIC PROCESS
THAT REPLACES SCAPING
GOATING...

these Rituals, though
done IN community, ³
are Really very
INTERNAL.

take care of Yourself,
open up however,
much You want to,
and pay special
attention to Your own
sense of things.

today I ask the sky to
hear my prayers, to forgive
me and love me.



AMIDAH

Writing Activities

1. Take time to review this past year. What were the major themes? What was last year all about? Reflect on your physical well-being, emotional well-being, + spiritual well-being.

Think about what you want to let go of + how you want to change.

2. Do the work of Teshuvah. Acknowledge our mistakes with ourselves + G-d, with Community, + in our relationships. Forgive ourselves + others. Meditate on forgiveness + Compassion.

SPACE TO WRITE...

ALENU

the ALENU is a prayer that i have a hard time jn relating to or even justifying. it feels like this is a prayer about feeling superior to other people - "He hath not made us like the godless heathens or cast our lot with the multitudes."

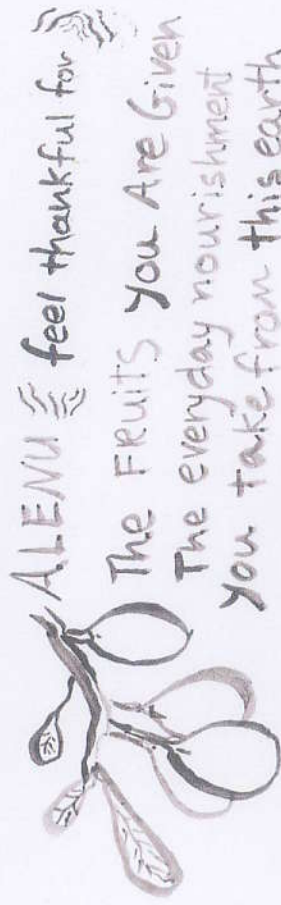
today, when we sing the alenu, instead of beving to a higher power, let us lay down on the floor, to humble ourselves with our community.

Alenu L'sha-be-ach lei-a-don hakol
La-tayt g'du-lah liyotzer b'ray-shiyt
Shelo ahsanu k'goyay ha'aratzot
V'lo Shamanu
K'mish-p'chot ha'adamah
Shelo sahm hel'keynu ka-hem
V'go-raleyenu ka-chal hah-mo-nam

Va'anachnu Koreem
Umish-ta-chayim umodeem

Liphney Melech
Malchay hamlachim
Hakadosh baruch hu

get on
THE FLOOR.
Meditate on
Community.



The FRUITS You Are Given
The everyday nourishment
You take from this earth

The water you drink

Sometimes it's easy to forget how
to be grateful, how to be humble



Thank the Shelter



Feel your roots holding

Traditional Jewish prayer practice
does not involve kneeling...
but on this day get close
to the ground



Remember your gratitude



I was taught about forgiveness through religion. It felt like a tool to wield power over people. Sometimes it felt like a way to transfer the burden to someone else.

Like if someone does this horrible thing, why is it up to the one who gets victimized to be forgiving? It seems like the only thing to worry about for the hurt person should be healing.

sometimes that makes me think about the difference between accountability & growth VS. forgiveness. i would prefer that people were accountable and growthful in our relationships, instead of focused on this much less tangible "forgiveness" business.

I was talking to a friend who said what if accountability and growth are not possible - does forgiveness come into play then? i say i don't know - that makes it seem like forgiveness is the boobie prize. she said that you need forgiveness to heal. i don't know about that.

The other thing about forgiveness that is unclear to me: I spent so much of my life as a girl child being taught that it was my job x to forgive and be silent. I feel like between religion, tv & an abusive family, that message came in loud & clear. I had to learn how & who NOT to forgive in order to make a safe life for myself - how does that fit into all of it? i don't know.

sometimes i think that the patriarchal & political structures of religions created the concept of "forgiveness" to keep us passive. like the opium given by more than one government to stave off rebellion. if we have to forgive people then we cant rebel.

I am afraid that my anger is what is keeping me safe? I spent so long finding my anger as a queer, jew, woman of color - I don't want to let it go, I want to use it.

FINDING HOME

As a mixed race Jew
I have often felt
Split at the roots
As if my wholeness
is only allowed deeply
deeply underground
origins can be
Complicated,
ignored, denied
or celebrated.

The places that have nourished us
deserve to be recognized and honored.

Building bridges
within ourselves
extends healing
Peace to the world



Palestinians returned to the Gaza in the same month that New Orleans was abandoned, I was transfixed by any news source I could find for days.

The connections overwhelmed me. I felt like I cried for a solid month.

I just kept thinking about home and loss, Home and loss home and loss.

For a minute I thought I was going nuts because the news stories varied so greatly. Friends were saying one thing, Pacifica stations were saying something else and the mainstream media was saying all kinds of other crap that didn't make sense. The mainstream news never reported about the people who stayed behind in N.O. to take care of their community, only that there was "looting". Just like they never reported the people who preserved their farm in the Gaza so that the next family could use it, only that there was "acts of terrorism". Just like they never reported that the day after the hurricane hit Bush bombed Iraq again, just that there was a small "insurgence".

I walked around feeling haunted. It was so clear to me that one people was being sacrificed so another people could be slaughtered. People of color in the south got screwed so people of color in the middle east could get decimated. I kept jumping off my couch to do something. But I could never figure out what to do. I felt like I was opening my mouth to scream but no sound was coming out.



inhale peace exhale struggle inhale home
 exhale disconnection inhale growth exhale fear
 inhale love and exhale love, imagine the love
 traveling from your heart and out your
 fingertips, reaching all places that need
 healing... accept nourishment from the
 universe, breathe in abundance exhale doubt,
 inhale faith exhale your atonements... let go



SPACE TO WRITE



where are
the places
you most
feel home?
write/draw
your homes
onto the turtle's
four directions.
In the center
circle put a word
or symbol that feels
like a bridge between
all of your places.....

The Scapegoat once carried

our "Sins" away
off into the
wilderness of
rock and sand



Now we can
write down
our atonements
our places needing
healing release



Put your atonement into
a basket along with the
atonements of others at
your gathering. Next pass
the basket around and
take another person's "sin"
Then read aloud. After the
Al Cheyt prayer, rip up the "sin" place it in a

al cheyt shechetana, lifanecha,

- ... staying stuck in conflicts with people.
- ... not loving every inch of my body.
- ... being in competition.
- ... not forgiving or softening when i could
- ... being afraid of being my full self
- ... shunning parts of me so that others can be in front
- ... not taking care of my body
- ... not taking care of my spirit
- ... rejecting the tenderness in other people because i'm afraid of that part of myself

- ... being mad at myself for feeling stuck
- ... justifying my stuckness so i can stay there
- ... being afraid of my whole truth
- ... believing there isn't room for my truth in the world
- ... acting from a place of panic
- ... staying stuck in guilt
- ... judging people when i was afraid
- ... trying to control the natural flow of things
- ... not allowing my full self to emerge
- ... not being grateful enough for what i have
- ... not accepting the generosity of each person
- ... being angry at my body.
- ... expecting myself to be competent all the time.
- ... getting angry and letting it simmer instead of letting it go.
- ... being cruel when i am threatened.
- ... being impatient.
- ... feeling guilty for taking up space.

I was wondering what to write for this zine, and where my inspiration was going to come from. I was looking into Gogol Bordello, whose lead singer came to the US in 1990 when his family fled upon the Chernobyl disaster. His maternal grandmother is Roma, but this was hidden from him until he was 14. He resides in NYC and is part of fighting for Roma rights. And now he is a bad-ass punk who has many albums, with one called Gypsy Punks Undertone World Strike. What's not to love?

Of course, seeing Gogol Bordello live is an experience not to be missed, and they're coming to the Northwest very soon. Before I impulsively bought tickets I luckily checked my (Jewish) planner. Of course the most raucous over-the-top band of all time is playing on Yom Kippur. Oooo. Burn. A moment in which these two of my ethnic identities are at odds. What is to be done? I am surely going to services these high holidays, so I might just have to trek it to Victoria BC to see this possibly dreamy performance.

I grew up knowing I was Jewish, and this was after my Hungarian Jewish family had converted to the lovely world of Catholicism. It was surrounded in a lack of definition. What does it mean to be ethnically Jewish with an absence of ritual? Yet, it still means something to us. I moved through a lot of different stages about my Jewish identity and am the only practicing member of my family. My mom, grandma, and aunt are supportive, and deep in my heart, and I know I was meant to reclaim this. I grew up without any particular religious affiliation, besides Christian camp, cuz it was an affordable week of Jesus infused fun. A week afterward I shook my head and dislodged all their strange ideas and memories of creepiness around the camp fire. S mores and songs only for me, thanks.

Although I met with some anti-Jewish sentiment in high school, from a Neo-Nazi asshole, who was also one of the very few queers in my small Ohio town, I went by fairly unscathed. Assimilation and the subsequent loss of culture smooths the relations with the locals, but also at the cost of who we are. As I now don a star of David necklace, and am "out" about my Jewish identity I have some strange interactions with people.

I realize for others this has been a life-long process of going against the grain of Christendom. It feels challenging at times to feel I belong in the Jewish community when I didn't grow up eating brisket (which is terrible, I have a lot of making up to do) or celebrating Hanukkah and I am going through a long ass learning process. My family is Ashkenazic, and I feel in Olympia this is generally unspoken as the "norm", while lacking a vision of the fact that Jews are from many places and Yiddish is by no means a universal Jewish language. There is much change that needs to happen in the white Jewish world of accepting Jews of color, whatever our background may be.

Although you may not have heard of Roma, Romani, or Gypsy referred to as an ethnicity, it is. Shit, I didn't even realize it until I was in my early twenties that it is an ethnic identity and also part of my heritage. A lot clicked into place for me after going through a long process of uncovering. A lot fell from the sky and swirled around me in the beauty of detective work and accepting my heart of hearts as the compass in my journey. It also resulted in a lot of grief swelling in my chest and that spilled into my life. I am now examining what joy is to be found after battling the secrecy of years to arrive here. After my Romani family, also from Hungary, were enveloped into the assimilation policies, we became what the government called "Brown Hungarians." I have a lot of

access to resources that Romani in Hungary, Eastern Europe, and beyond lack. US citizenship is a privilege for me, and so is the fact that while I grew up working class, my family is now middle class. I'm in college and have the ability to heal my wounds and expand my desires to create much of what I want. That also grants me the responsibility to be part of everyone reaching the ability to have the lives they deserve and yearn for.

Tikkun Olam.

In Eastern Europe since the fall of the Eastern Bloc, things have just gotten worse for Roma. They are being scapegoated as usual, and while Ashkenazic Jews have gained some privilege over time (how this happened certainly has to do with "whiteness", and a lot of other things, for another article altogether) the Roma population is still struggling against constant injustice. After 500 years of slavery that ended in the late 1800's and the forced assimilation of communism, racism has built up over time and change is perhaps closer than it has been.

I am currently scheming to go to Europe and see what I can do for the struggle for Roma rights. I am also gradually creating connections here and repairing what has been missing for a very long time for me. It is not uncommon for Romani ancestry to be kept a secret in families, and I have found several people who are part of this uncovering. I am examining the privilege I do have so I can use it towards a goal of justice, and searching for ways to feel empowered and whole about who I am. Who I am beyond these labels as well. A person who likes silly jokes and swimming. I have been seeing myself as a victim for far too long, and not only is this inaccurate, but it keeps me from knowing my own true soul. And also traps me into serving a system that wants us to feel powerless.

Not anymore.

L'chaim! To joy, celebration, and the freedom found in the magic of repairing this world... Finn.

*Alright, I don't really feel like going all into the story of the Roma people, but if you have access to the world wide web via your local library, then you can do your own research. The basic scoop: we originated in India a long time ago and now live in lots of places and similar to the Jewish people, all have similarities and differences across the world. I highly recommend We Are the Romani People by Ian Hancock, and I strongly anti-recommend anything by people who are NOT Romani, which is the majority of literature available.

To get my zine, music, or to just contact me: originalfinn@gmail.com

Finn c.

(Do several times
throughout the day...
create your own...)

Al Cheyt Shechetana L'fanecha...

Things we want to release deeply....

* Instead of
rounding yr
chest, touch
Your Heart ♥

אֲשַׁמְנוּ: בְּגָדֵנוּ: גִּזְלָנוּ: דִּבְרֵנוּ דָּפִי:
הֶעֱרִינוּ: לְהִרְשָׁעֵנוּ: יָדֵנוּ: קִמְצָנוּ:
טָפְלָנוּ שָׁקָר: לַעֲצוֹן רַע: בִּזְיוֹנוּ: לִצְנוּ:
מִלְדֵּנוּ: גֵּאצָּנוּ: סִרְרָנוּ: עֲוִיָּנוּ:
פִּשְׁעֵנוּ: צָרְרָנוּ: קִשְׁיֵנוּ עָרָף: רָשָׁעֵנוּ:
שִׁחָתָנוּ: הִלְבֵּנוּ: הִעֲרִינוּ: הִעֲקָעֵנוּ: ←

Ashamnu. Bagadnu. Gazalnu. Divarnu Dophi.

He'evinu. V'hirshanu. Zadnu. Chamasnu. Taphalnu Sheker.

Ya'atznu Ra. Kizavnu. Latznu. Maradnu. Niyatznu.

Saramu. Avinu. Pashanu. Tzaramu. Kishinu Oreph.

Rashanu. Shichatnu. Ti'avnu. Ta'inu. Titanu.

AL CHEYT SHECHETANA L'FANECHA...

- ... remaining silent when i really wanted to speak out
- ... not standing up for myself when i needed to
- ... seeing others only as "good" or "bad," not seeing people in all of their complexities
- ... lacking compassion towards myself or others during difficult times
- ... being embarrassed/ashamed of my history
- ... neglecting self-care and procrastinating when i feel afraid
- ... running and numbing and not stopping to feel or be.
- ... being defensive and unwilling to hear feedback.
- ... putting walls up with people.

Fix K

! demand accountability
and showing up

This year- we are not asking for forgiveness
of our sins- we are asking
for the strength to take
Responsibility

ועל כלם אלוה סליחות סלה לנו: מחל לנו: כפר לנו: ←

V'al kulam eloha s'lichot
S'lach lanu
Michol lanu
Kaper lanu

For this struggle I ask for the strength to grow
~~For all of these, God of forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.~~
May I find forgiveness in myself, learn from my mistakes, and become whole.
May the collective power of community heal us and may we be humble and gentle
with ourselves and each other.

"on intergenerational trauma and healing"

we are children giving birth to ourselves, as queer jews of color and queer jewish allies. we come from multiple histories of trauma, displacement, colonization, and assimilation.

in my mom's experience being jewish was associated with persecution, with orthodox and oppressive traditions, which is the reason my mom never passed it on to me. instead i grew up with the residuals of trauma - watching Holocaust videos with my little sister when i was six or seven or eight. i remember seeing skeletal human beings digging mass graves, shaved heads and dirty bodies under gas chamber showers, barracks stuffed with sick, starvation stricken people, and lamps and shoes made from human beings. these images are burned in my memory.

the line of trauma carried down from my grandfather. his mother and sister perished in the Holocaust, and i didn't even know where, or how, but i do know that he emigrated before the camps started in poland. my grandfather was witness to atrocities and then acting them out himself. how quickly one turns from victimized to perpetrator.

submerged/hidden history doesn't die, it gets carried with us and re-birthing.

i'm part of the lucky generation because i grew up bourgeois and educated, while my mom grew up in buildings stacked upon each other, 100 families in each building. and "girls were screaming all the time, they were being beaten up by their mothers or their fathers. they didn't beat up the boys too much." home was not refuge for my mother. her room was in the living room and she slept in a fold out cot, sharing the apt with the other 4 in her family. my mom had lots of trauma - the short story

being that she became a ward of the state at age thirteen.

this is not my story but every time i feel it in my bones. when i think about my mom's childhood, tears well up, my nose runs, my throat tightens as though swallowing a sword, and i can't speak. can you inherit trauma?

my parents were each escaping their pasts when they found each other. my father, chinese from malaysia, migrated first to montreal and then berkeley, ca. my mother left new york for california, where she met my father when her scholarship money ran out. they were trying to figure out the future - upward mobility and hope and new beginnings through their children.

there's no question i was part of the lucky generation, born into more opportunity and fewer traumas than my parents. but they did not escape their pasts. i grew up with constant fighting. to survive, i became invisible.

we are continually re-enacting traumas with one another.

jewish people have persisted in the face of erasure, through exile, pogroms, and the holocaust. in longing for homeland and safety, must israel victimize palestinian people? in israel/palestine, the exiled create new exiles, through neo-colonization and borders.

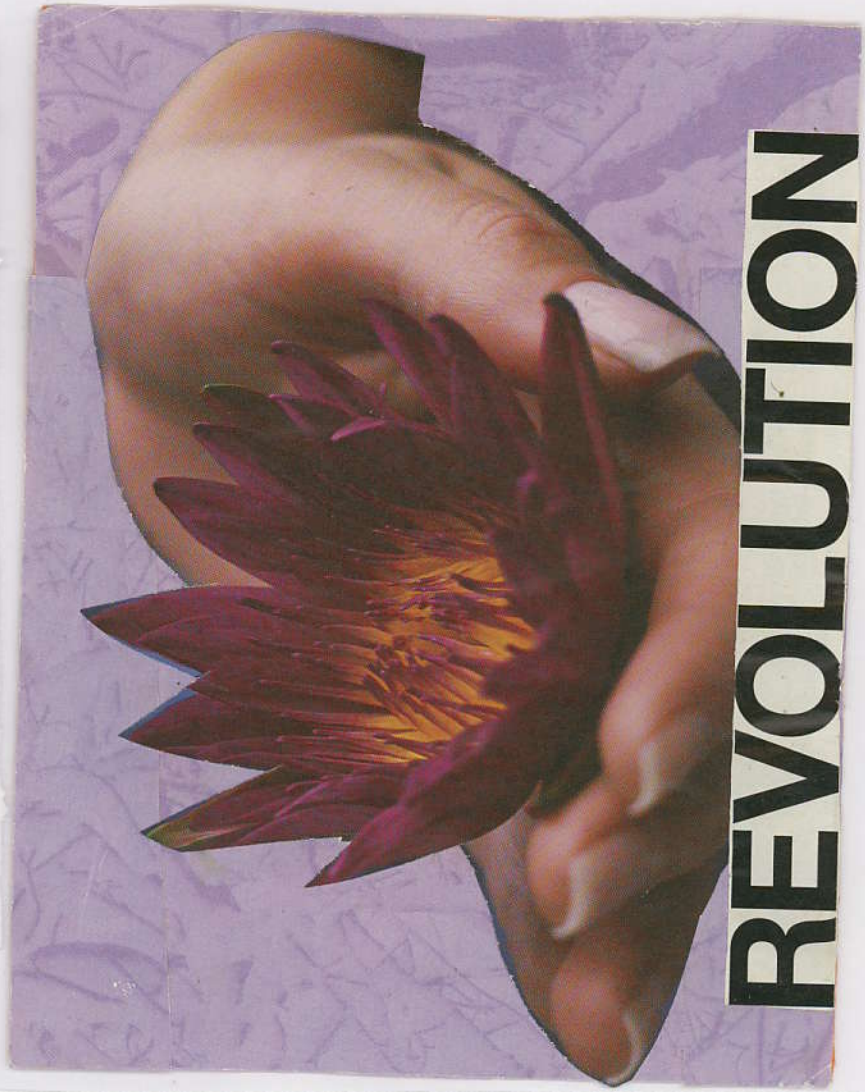
we cannot escape the past, but we can transform it. to speak it makes it real, in the only way possible.

My body carries the weight of three genocides- Armenian, Jewish and the current genocide against Arab peoples in white owned lands.

I have read that animals carry group memories in their cells. And I wonder what we carry with us from decades of historical trauma.

Do women have group memory of rape?

Do people of color share group memory of torture and abandonment?



Mixed



Lots of

History falls apart



into a white face



Native n' Jewish



Avinu Malkenu, reflections.....
 as a kid I thought of G-d as
 a big man, with a big beard
 in the sky.... like Moses..



Now, I don't know what G-d
 is.... but it's not a man.

avinu malkenu	אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ
chanenu va'anenu	חֲנֵנוּ וְנַעֲנֵנוּ
ku eyn banu va'asim	כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים
chsey imanu	עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ
tzedakah vachessed	צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד
vehoshi'enu	וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ

Avinu malkenu means "our father, our king"
 and the translation of the song is this:

OUR FATHER, OUR KING, BE GRACIOUS TO US
 AND ANSWER US, THOUGH WE HAVE NO MERITS
 DEAL CHARITABLY AND KINDLY WITH US,
 AND SAVE US.

ouch. I get the part about humility, but this is
 about as straight-up patriarchal (echoing family
 abuse dynamics) as you can get. and yet, I love
 this song. I wrote this years ago:

"Sometimes it feels good to give up power, and sometimes we are
 forced to. we have a right to choose where, when + how
 we give up power. we honor the distinction between
 subjugation and making the choice to be vulnerable."

Avinu Malkenu reflections

I'm thinking of that song,
"elochei hememet" where we
sing all different names for
G-d. What if we all said,

"Our G-d, our _____."

"..... truth."

"..... Community."

"..... Spirit."

"..... Sky."

That way, when we sing

Avinu Malkenu, we have
the words & images of
all of our ancestors, of
nature, of freedom.....

Avinu Malkenu is a good point of focus for
looking at my conflicts w/in Jewish space/
community/observance. The reality is I feel
scared of Jewish community as much as I love it.
I feel myself in Jewish spaces in ways that are
specific & deep — singing Avinu Malkenu, I can connect
back to all my ancestors who sang this song, I
feel the collective pain & longing, the Jewish story
told through my body & my voice. Then there is all
the isolation, I feel in those spaces — the detached
intellectualism, the somber, deadened feeling I get
from so many services, the longing I feel there
threatens to strangle me. I want to explode it
open so we can really connect, in the NOW,
not just through our history of PAIN.

BIRKHAT COHANIM

we bless each other

Y'varechecha

Adonai

V'yishmerecha

Amen

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וישמרהך.

May god bless you and keep you

May you find love within you and hold your self inside of it

May you be protected by the sweetness and strength of the community.

Ya'er

Adonai

Pana'av

Eilecha

Vichunecha

Amen

יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ ויחנך.

May god's presence shine upon you and be gracious to you.

May you feel connected to the world and find the things you need in life.

May the wholeness of spirit grant you safety, serenity, and fill you with light.

Yisah

Adonai

Pana'av

Eilecha

Viyaseym

L'cha

Shalom

Amen

יִשָּׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וישם לך שלום.

May god's presence be with you and give you peace.

May you rest in the knowledge that the universe supports you.

May you be warmed by the heart of our struggle and find peace through our unity.

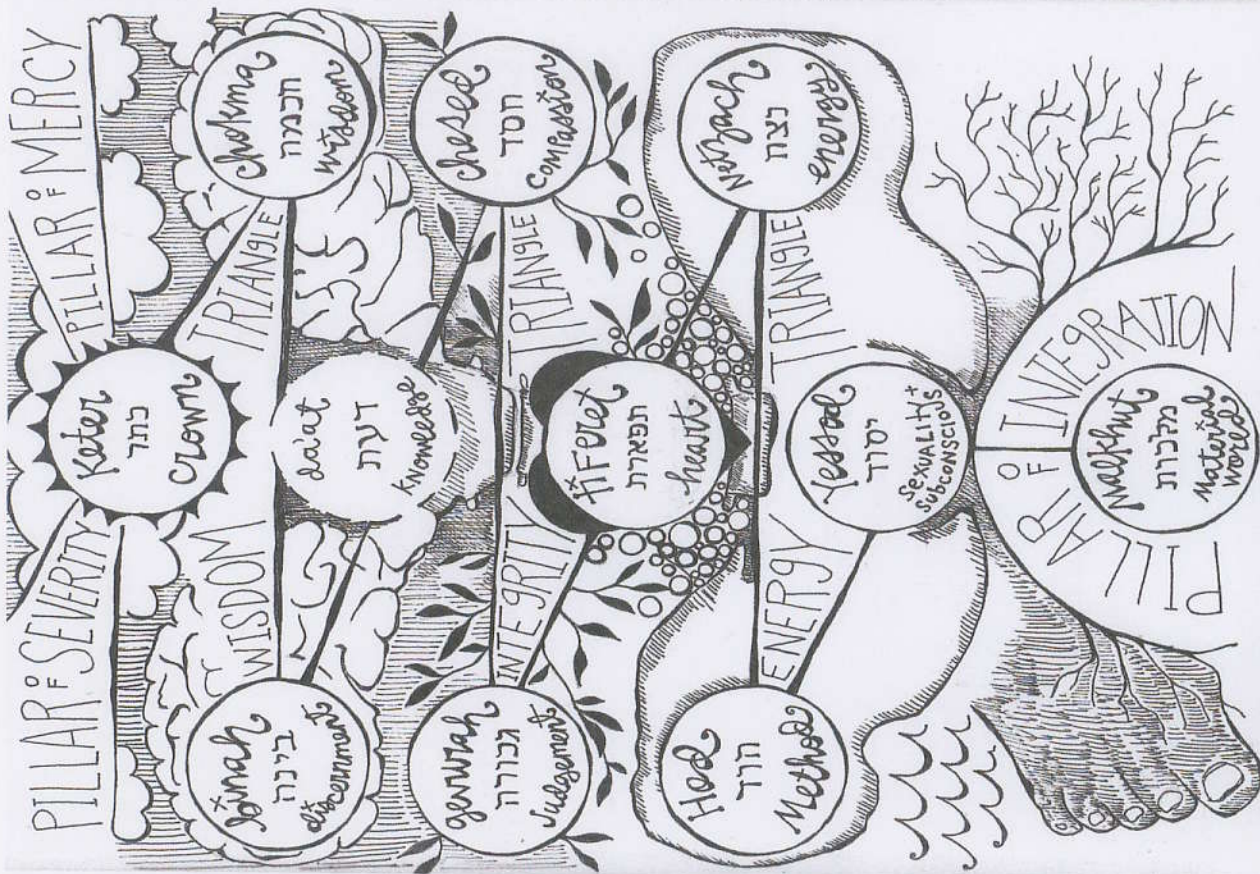
MIDRASH

I was raised by holy orthodox women who questioned everything the rabbi said and then did some version of it anyway. they taught me the power in making things yours.

My aunt asked the rabbi for permission to bless her children after her husband left. This is NOT what jewish women are supposed to do. she convinced him- so i was the only kid in class who had a woman bless them on shabbos.

Last year only and I were taught and given permission by another rabbi. This was exciting because as quereers we don't get access to rabbis often- we were given permission to bless ourselves and our community.

This year- Y K 2004- We say don't give us permission just give us the words. We all have the power to fill ourselves and each other with the light and love of community. We are already HOLY- this blessing is for wholeness.



THE TREE OF LIFE

The tree of life is a map between the physical world and the innermost source. It flows in both directions, bringing universal insights & god-energy into the world through study and prayer (top-down) and elevating the energies of the physical world to inform our understanding of the creator, through song, dance, food, sex, and other physical activities (bottom-up). This is not about a hierarchy - every sphere (sephira) on the tree of life is equally important and necessary to the wholeness of creation, every sephira is a face of god. This simultaneous drawing down and raising up is also symbolized by the star of david, the two overlapping triangles pointing up and down.



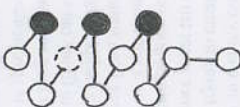
The kabbalah is a major piece of our spiritual heritage that can be hard to access, and it is frustrating to me that it has been so appropriated by white mystics (a la Aleister Crowley, etc.) - so much so that it's hard to find information that is authentically Jewish. It is my dream to share this with my community, with queers, Jews of Color, with people who have complicated selves and experiences. There's more information than anyone could absorb in one sitting, but the goal of sharing it is to offer a tool for connecting to our Jewish legacy that is not about text, or hierarchy, but is about our bodies and minds and the energies that flow through us and the universe. I want to offer exercises that can help us connect. As a person with a disability and as a survivor I have felt cut off from this kind of embodied knowledge, so this is a reclamation of our inheritance.

Traditionally you're not supposed to be able to study Kabbalah until you're in your forties (and women are never supposed to, although they have, and do)... For me, Kabbalah has been helpful because as a kid I internalized so many lies about myself, the world, and god. Absorbing the structure of the tree of life has helped me undo some of that negative programming and find the power in myself, to connect to the world and to mystical knowledge... I would like to share some of that, here, in a space where our hearts are free to share what we know... if you continue to study and read and learn about Kabbalah and the tree of life you will hear many different stories, and the reality

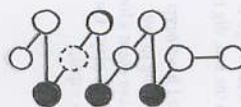
pillar of integration



pillar of mercy



pillar of severity



is there are a million interpretations, but this will give you a basic, relateable diagram. I suggest the book "The Receiving" by Tirzah Firestone as a really good understandable explanation of the tree of life based in women's experiences of spirituality throughout Jewish history.

THE THREE PILLARS

The tree of life has three pillars - the pillar of mercy, the pillar of severity, and the pillar of integration. The pillar of integration is in the center, the spinal column which energy runs through, from the feet up to the crown and back down. When you can feel your spine in that way you know that you are centered, grounded, integrating all that is true inside of you. This kind of self-awareness means you are not giving away too much, or judging and protecting too much, you are present, you are alive, you are connected.

The pillar of mercy, on the right, is about open, flowing energy - receptive, compassionate, dynamic, expansive, interactive. The pillar on the left, the pillar of severity, is about dividing, knowing, protecting, and doing what needs to be done. If you are thrown out of balance in one way or another it can be helpful to meditate on the sephiroth on the other side of the tree of life. For example: because my foot was amputated when I was a kid, my right side has had to do most of the work, and has been a symbol of my will to survive. As I drew love and mercy into my left side, I have been able to integrate and redistribute these energies, allowing all of my self to become more whole and actualized.

[[I go around and around in my head about which side of the tree corresponds to which side of my body... For years, I associated my right side w/ the left side of the tree, I got tattoos about it, meditated on it... I drew the tree of life with the right foot on the left and the open nerve-endings/roots spreading into the earth on the right... Now I feel it in me reversed, the way the books say... I feel like I could write a lot more about this question but I now I gotta accept my process instead of trying to figure it out]]

THE 10 SEPHIROTH

The sephiroth are numbered one through ten starting at the top.*

- 1- Keter. Crown. Above the head. Oneness. Divine nothingness. This is the innermost source, the creator, beyond the reach of understanding. To know Keter is to have faith in the unknown.
- 2- Chokma. Wisdom. Right brain. Undifferentiated receptivity. Minds and hearts engaged as one entity. The imagination to create. This is the flash of inspiration that gives rise to creation.
- 3- Binah. Discernment. Left brain. Understanding. Building one idea upon another, differentiating between this and that. This is when inspiration becomes an idea.

These 3 sephiroth are called the "Wisdom Triangle." Critical thinking (Binah) informed by and informing deeper meanings (Chokma), connected to the absolute truth of oneness/nothingness.

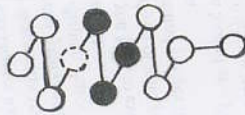
Take a moment to focus on your sense of oneness and connectedness to inspiration and openness to new ideas. Breathe deep and focus on bringing light into your body through the top of your head.

On the vowel-sound "eee," sing a note that is near the top of your register. When you run out of breath, breathe deep into your belly and continue to sing this high note. If you are with other people, observe the different notes and the vibrating frequency created by everyone's voices together. Feel yourself inside a bubble of light, and allow yourself to simultaneously observe and accept this experience.

The "eeee" sound will create a buzzing sound in your head. Imagine that it is fire, pure spirit moving through you.*

Da'at, which is in the middle near the top of the Tree of Life, has a permeable line around it because it is not an actual sephira - it is a placeholder. I'll talk about that more later.

* If any of these exercises don't work for you, allow yourself to make adaptations without judgement. For example, if you are not able to make a high "eeee" sound, make another sound or invent a movement that reminds you of fire.



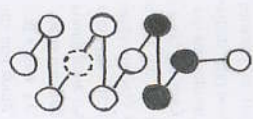
Integrity
triangle

- 4- Chesed. Compassion. Love. Reaching out to help, teach, heal, feed and sooth. This can correspond to the right shoulder or arm.
- 5- Gevurah. Judgement. The corrective reflex when too much has been given away. Strength. Will. Left shoulder or arm.
- 6- Tiferet. Heart. Beauty. Harmony. Balance. Truth. Awe. Opening and feeling and being with.

These 3 sephiroth are called the "integrity triangle." Tiferet corresponds to the heart/center and is responsible for integrating the loving qualities of Chesed and the protective qualities of Gevurah, balancing them and giving them both weight.

Take a moment to breathe and focus on your heart. Let yourself open and trust your connection to others and to your self, the beauty of all you have to give and receive. Accept the necessity and healthiness of your limitations. Breathe and feel yourself encircled in a love that is both expansive and protective.

Sing an open vowel sound "ahhh" somewhere in the middle of your range, not too high or low. Whatever you feel in your heart, accept it and keep singing through it. Visualize a big open sky and continue to breathe when you need to and then continue to sing "ahhh," feeling your heart expand. Move your shoulders and arms while you sing. Feel the love of the other people who are with you, and who you are in relationship with. Let the sound be like a wind blowing through your body, emptying you of self-doubt.



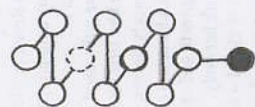
energy
triangle

- 7- Netzach. Energy. Eternity. Dominance. Attraction and charisma. Corresponds to the right hip or leg.
- 8- Hod. Method. Time. Submission. Purpose. Being thought-out, measured, understated in your actions. Left hip or leg.
- 9- Yesod. Sexuality and subconscious. Genitals and reproductive organs. Creativity.

These 3 sephiroth are the "energy triangle." Together they have the ability to bring things to fruition, wedding personal energy with practical method in order to be successful at creating our dreams.

Take a moment to breathe and focus on your pelvis, hips and genitals, feeling the energy that you hold there. Know that you are a powerful being whose existence on this planet is precious and right. You have the ability to feel, to hold and work with these energies that pulse through you, to create and give birth to new projects, relationships, dreams and life itself. Whether you express yourself in bursts of passion or slow, intentional movement, it is your right to be exactly as you are.

On a note that is towards the bottom of your range but not as low as your voice will go, sing a long "ooooo" sound. Tilt your pelvis from side to side, front to back, and imagine water pouring through you.

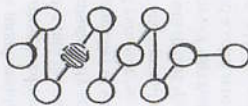


Physical
Manifestation

10- Malkhut. Material world. Feet. Earth. Physical manifestation. Bodies. Food. Home.

Take a moment to breathe and focus on your feet (or foot, as the case may be) and your connection to the earth. Feel the weight of your body giving way to gravity, and thank the earth for your existence. Think about the things you love to do with your body, the senses with which you perceive the world around you. Notice the temperature of the air on your skin, the weight of your clothes. Observe the colors, the light and darkness in the space around you. Listen to the sounds of the birds outside, or as the case may be, the cars, sirens, buzzing electronics, footsteps, whatever other sounds are taking up space in your world. Allow yourself to feel grateful for the physical manifestations of reality, for they allow us to have experiences and to actualize our selves.

As deep as your voice can go, sing a long, low "ohhhh" sound. Continue to sing while you feel your connection to the earth through your feet or whatever parts of your body are making contact with the ground, or wherever you feel the impact of gravity. Send energy down through your body and simultaneously imagine pulling energy up through the ground. Wiggle your toes. Stamp your feet. You are connected. You are here.



-da'at-
KNOWLEDGE

The remaining unmentioned sephira is Da'at - knowledge. It is not even mentioned in some books about Kabbalah, because it is not considered to be an actual sephira, it has no number and doesn't correspond to tarot, astrology or other metaphysical systems as other sephiroth do. It does, however, correspond to the voice. *It's actually da'at know this for sure*

Da'at is the possibility of knowledge without understanding. To make knowledge your god is to cut yourself off from the bigger truths of the universe. To give voice to knowledge that is not informed by spirit/wholeness is to allow oneself to become a tool of other people's will.

Here is the story I like about Da'at. Notice that Malkhut, the physical world, dangles below the rest of it, which is visually out of balance with the symmetry of the tree. One story says that it is because Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge that the world fell out of balance. I believe this is a parable about separation from the physical world, the ability to "know" without having true insight, without caring, without feeling. The work of Kabbalah is about making whole, infusing the physical world with the truths of the creator. Realness. Presence. Self. *Putting Malkhut back up in its rightful place on the tree.*

I imagine an exercise that could be done in community, where the tree of life is mapped out on the floor in physical space. Everyone would move to the area where they feel most drawn - either a space where they feel most powerful, or a space where they want to do work and strengthen themselves. I imagine that each section would take turns making sounds and doing movements that correspond to the sephiroth where they stand, passing the sound/energy/movement down the path and back up again. Then I imagine everyone doing the sounds and movements at the same time, feeling what it means to be in community, where everyone has different strengths and areas of growth, where together we are whole.

THE THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES

יהוה ירוה אל רחום וחנון ארך אפים ורב-חסד ואמת נצח חסד
לאֱלֹפִים נִשָּׂא עֵץ נִפְשֵׁעַ וְחַטָּאָה וְנִקָּה:

Adonay adonay el rahum vechanun ereh apayim verav hesed
ve'emet notzer hesed la'alafim nosej avon vafesha vehata'ah
venakey.

Hashem, Hashem, God, Compassionate and Gracious, slow to anger, and Abundant in
Kindness and Truth, Preserver of kindness for thousands [of generations], Forgiver of
iniquity, willful sin, and error, and Who cleanses (forgives).

this song, the thirteen attributes of
G-D, is really only 12 1/2. the
original quote, from exodus, says
"...cleanses, but does not forgive completely,
visiting the sins of the parents upon the
children + grandchildren, to the 3rd
+ 4th generation." in the book of JONAH,
this was changed to "and forgives."
now we sing the misquote in synagogues.
★ this is just one example w/in the
texts where things changed w/ time...
where people chose what they
wanted to believe...

Torah stories surrounded my childhood.
I used to ask my mother questions about
stuff sometimes and she would tell me to
go look in the torah. Then I realized
that my teachers only taught me certain
stories, and there are scads of other ones
I was never taught. They only taught me
about how they wanted me to behave - be
straight, be grateful for god's rules,
follow the rules. As queers our relation-
ship to torah is censored by our hetero
teachers and establishments. Our
relationship to it is affected by intense
hegemony. In jewish classes nomy & i
took last year, people kept saying
"if a donkey was reading the torah, he
would be looking for all the places where
it talked about donkeys. we shouldn't
need to see ~~pxs~~ ourselves in the text
in order to value it." i think the point
is actually that if we don't see ourselves
in it, we are kept at a distance from it.
ironically, it seems like it is this
distance that gives us room to question,
grow, and push the bounds of jewishness.

TORAH
excerpt
adapted
from chapter
58 ISAIAH



TRUE FASTING

The place where all my faiths

meet - fasting is not about

ego or penance... fasting is not

about punishing the hunger and

rewarding it later... True fasting

means letting love shine through

your works and intentions. Fasting

means you get out of the way

of something bigger than yourself faith.

it means releasing those bound unjustly

Setting free the oppressed

breaking every yoke

Sharing bread with the hungry

Sheltering the oppressed and

homeless.

Clothing the naked when you see them

and not turning your back on

your own,

As you help others your own wounds will heal

your own light will break through like the dawn.

D.V.

How do you allow yourself to be a channel
of healing in the world?

In what ways do you give back
The gifts you are given?

How do you give from a place of
abundance and not duty, guilt or self-
sacrifice?

What does "True Fasting" mean to you?

What does it mean

To fast in community? If fasting means giving up

the ego and not turning your back on your own,

how do you embrace yourself in that process?

Who are "your own," what is

"your own?"

"If you remove from your midst oppression...
you will be like a watered garden,
Like a spring whose water never fails."

- Isaiah Chapter 58

D.V.

UNATANA TOKEF



Spring the
trap of oppression.

Our Biggest Challenges
are Our Biggest Faith
Opportunities

God has not chosen
us to "Smite" God/Goddess
has chosen us to learn.

How far you take your faith
is up to you... faith is free.

Learn, fill yourself up on freedom.
So, I think about my "afflictions."

What have they taught me?

In Healing My addictions I learn a deep process
of uncovering layers, generational coping/survival SKILLS.
As I release the colonialism from my body I find
a new self emerges, a more compassionate deeper self

A patient curious hopeful self. There are so many
things to heal and the learning is endless. Endless. beautiful
and yes sometimes ugly too. But can't Rage be
tender? be beautiful? Rage teaches me my worth, truly

Some of my favorite moments are when I can laugh
at myself. Yes humor gets me through colonialism trauma.
I like that my disability has given me a broad community of folks.
I slow down and talk to the older people, hear their stories.
I slow down and learn with the little ones. I slow down and

Feel The mystery of mama earth, swim her waters, feel her bounty.



Rethinking God's Smites



Who is the Cast out, Hunted part of Yourself?

Traps of self hatred can be triggered
by encounters with oppression:

Assimilation - poverty

-disability

-RACISM

-hunger



Colonialism, Addiction, Isolation

Make friends with
your most cast out self

COMPANION
ANIMAL

You
Know,
the Self
that always
seems to
"Screw up" or
Sabotage your
freedom and well
being. The self that
is afraid to feel good.
Because the traps are so
familiar. Adopt this animal
as your new best friend. Give them
food, love and attention.

Make a List of Your Biggest Challenges



☺ I tried to write about sexual abuse in the context of Yom Kippur but it was too big for me. I could just write this.

My anger is holy
I do not seek to release it
just as he did not seek to
Release me from his grip

This angel is on fire
And she will not stop burning
until the Barbie dream house
She got for keeping secrets is
burned to the ground.

Reclamation

- I reclaim the sin of being queer and honor myself for putting my truth to power
- I reclaim the sin of being a slut and honor myself for over coming body hatred and sexual abuse
- I reclaim the sin of being disrespectful and honor myself for having the guts to say fuck off.
- I reclaim the sin of being violent or angry and honor myself for fighting back and rising up
- I reclaim the sin of holding a grudge and honor myself for sticking to my guns and being the occasional bitch
- I reclaim the sin of not honoring my father & mother and honor myself for choosing safety and sanity
- I reclaim the sin of L'shon H'rah and honor myself for speaking the truth and saying outloud what hurts.
- I reclaim the sin of lying and honor myself for protecting when necessary.
- I reclaim the sin of gluttony and honor myself for knowing I deserve more.
- I reclaim the sin of not trusting god and honor myself for trusting my gut
- I reclaim the sin of not following Torah and honor myself for following my heart.

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT SELF-DEFENSE
ON YOM KIPPUR BECAUSE

- ATTONEMENT REQUIRES ACCOUNTABILITY
- ATTONEMENT IS SELF CARE
- THE LESS WE HAVE SECRETS THE MORE WE HAVE ACCESS TO OUR WHOLE SELVES
- THE MORE WE KNOW OURSELVES THE LESS SHIT WE PUT ON OTHERS
- THE MORE COMPASSIONATE WE ARE WITH OURSELVES THE LESS LIKELY WE ARE TO PERPETRATE VIOLENCE
- THE MORE WE KNOW OURSELVES THE GREATER OUR SENSE OF SELF.

BECAUSE IN ORDER TO DEFEND OURSELVES
WE MUST FIRST HAVE A SENSE OF
SELF TO PROTECT

Self defense, empowerment, survivor's guilt and forgiveness are connected for me in a never ending circular path.

Survivor's guilt is actually the big one. It's like this part of me that says that I can't /deserve to be here. It's this part of me that believes that no matter what I have to take care of other people because I have to make up for the fact that I am living when so many others aren't. For me, when I feel burned out on something, it's usually because I'm floating in a sea of survivors guilt and I have given too much of myself away.

If I don't let go of the SG it makes me feel like I don't have a right to defend myself. SG means I don't have a right to take care of myself because I shouldn't be here without everyone else who isn't here anymore. It means I don't have a right to have needs, because why should I need when so many others don't get their needs met? Some part of me thinks that I don't have a right to be here. This part of me is disempowered.

**I am letting go of survivors guilt
by forgiving myself.**

((I used to feel like I had to forgive everyone for everything. But I could never forgive myself for anything.)))

I don't know how to forgive myself

YIZKOR

When I think of what has been lost, I think of the radical possibilities that were cut off with the holocaust. We lost not only 6,000,000 individuals, we lost traditions, leaders, thinkers, texts, practices, whole communities with all their complexities. So many radical & progressive possibilities for jewish culture were destroyed and erased from our knowledge. We personally feel the loss today, because we bear the burden of having to invent this stuff ourselves.

I think also of the injustice that has been done in my name, half a world away in Israel/Palestine. The people who have been killed for trying to protect their homes, for living on so-called holy land. Little kids shot in the street. Mothers dying in childbirth because they're stopped by soldiers and can't get to the hospital. Whole communities destroyed by tanks. We feel this loss because the Palestinian people are a part of us, because we are partially responsible for their deaths, and because this brutality ruins our chances of learning from each other, of living in peace in a land we can call home.

My body knows that it is not of this land, and it aches for what has been lost here as well. The genocide of indigenous cultures and communities, millions of people displaced, murdered, now considered ancient history. Every day that I live here, I am benefiting from that loss, just as sure as I am hurt by it. My reality cannot be separated from the colonization and genocide that surround me.

It is part of my process of t'shuvah to mourn these losses, and commit myself to a future in which all land is returned to its caretakers. As a person who benefits from whiteness, I will keep my eyes, ears and heart open, and say what I feel and believe even when it distances me from my community and/or peers. I will use what I have learned from my Jewish upbringing to fight for justice and self-determination, wholeness and love.

" This is what im feeling about YK 2004. CONFLICT.

Today is hugely ironic. Right now Palestinian people are under military seige because Israel "increases security" during Yom Kippur.

so much more to go. I have purged as much as I can and i have

The YK war is called the Ramadan war. I was taught that Israel was attacked. Really, it was follow-up from stuff a long time coming all the way back from 1947.

We are victims they told me. The amazing this about that way of thinking about it is it prevents taking responsibility. It seems like if we are always victims we can never be responsible for the pain we cause. The metaphor of being attacked on the day of atonement for my mother is about Jewish survival. For me it's about taking responsibility. The holiest day, the day we look at what we have created in the world and take stock of how we treat others and ourselves, on this day a war started and I never hear people talking about how Jews helped create it. My friend charity reminded me of something I learned in Zionist school years ago. Moshe Dyan created "plan dalet" in 1947 a full year before the Israeli war of independence, that created exile for 300,000 Palestinian people. 300,000 people were moved. Did they die? Were they relocated? I think the shame of this keeps us from healing. The shame keeps us from taking responsibility.

When we name the dead during Yizcor I am Thinking of my dad even tho he is walking around jackson, florida with a changed name cause it is just that hard to have an name that makes you someone from the middle east. he has killed off parts of himself, just as my hebrew school orthodox teachers tried to do to me. teaching me to bury one part of myself in religion and the other in nationalis t politics.

When we say the prayer for the 6 million I am thinking about the million who is going without access to H2O and the chance to fuck without the sound of machine guns.

What I am feeling about this holiday-this holy day- is completely CONFLICTED. How can one part of me fight for forgiveness while the other half of me is being denied and destroyed? i want to be humble & i want 2 fight. I want to feel as light as an angel but insted i wish for the power to wage my own mournful war.

Human beings seek integrity like water seeks its level, grow toward creative and just solutions like plants grow toward sunlight, sometimes by crooked paths, but always reaching. If in the midst of these wars we inhabit, in which everything is at stake... we can invent and recapture the means to make a sustainable culture of resistance, a ways of like as potable as a canteen and deep as a well, then we'll make it. Not each of us, but all of us. Because as powerful as the wielders of death appear, in the end life is stronger.

Aurora
Levins
Morales
Medicine
Stones

i recently learned about this idea of the "narcissistic wound." i learned about it from my therapist, in relation to my father, why he can't stand to have me assert my own perspective, because it takes the attention away from himself and the reality he has constructed to protect himself, even though i'm not threatening his safety, it feels to him like a survival issue and he reacts as if it is.

this concept really hit home for me, it's something i have observed in my family, in myself, and in my culture, it underlies so much of the insanity i struggle with. i never knew there was a simple term for it, i always called it "when someone is so insecure that they can't handle anyone else having their own reality."

i recently thought about this again when i went to a "friends of saheel" peace and justice in jerusalem conference in hyde park. i saw a guy named marc ellis speak about holocaust theory and racism among "progressive" jews towards palestinians - paternalistic attitudes that don't allow for the reality of palestinian people's own story, own destiny, own struggle for freedom, and why? because, many israeli and american jews say, that could lead to another holocaust, any threat to jewish power - even talking about it, or so we are led to believe - could lead to another holocaust.

in so many jewish homes, the holocaust is right around the corner, it is protected as if it is bigger than god, bigger than love, any criticism of israel is treated as anti-semitic and eventually leading to the slaughter of your loved ones, because of this, it can be difficult to even say the word "palestinian" in jewish company.

i told shira about the parallel i saw, and asked her to explain more about the "narcissistic wound" to me, she said that everyone has some level of narcissism - the belief that the world revolves around you, we all fluctuate between healthy and unhealthy levels of narcissism, whether it's too much or too little, a narcissistic wound is when there is an event that injures you in your identity formation process, where your sense of core self is injured, you then create a reality that revolves around both you and the injury, you create a matrix of responses to protect that

injury, and if it gets leaned on, then the reaction of what happened at that time gets triggered.

why does my need for independence and self-protection mean that my father thinks i hate him? why does the need of palestinian people for their own land, their own justice, mean that jews believe we will all be killed? probably because that has been the underlying expectation all along, that is what the original injury taught us.

it's deeper than a persecution complex, there is a wound, what is the therapeutic treatment for a narcissistic wound? spiritual healing, addressing the original trauma and letting it go, returning to a sense of wholeness, (t'shuva)

by healing we make ourselves stronger and better adapted to our environments, we carry with us the wisdom of our experience and can apply it with compassion towards all of life's complexities, i don't believe that there is an easy political answer to the deep injustice that is the current state of israel/palestine, but i do believe that if a just peace is negotiated and nurtured there, the lessons and implications will be immense, how do you start a healing process between colonizers and the genocided and displaced? what does real freedom look like? how do people share power? (hint - it starts with basic human needs like food, water, shelter, family, freedom of movement afforded to ALL citizens)

i think in some ways jews believe we will never be forgiven, the way my dad thinks i will never forgive him, and they may be right, but how do we know? how do we find out? more money and more tanks and more silence and more denial?

i understand that many people who lived through the holocaust could no longer believe in god, how could such horror be part of the plan, we must really be alone, i can relate to this feeling, still, i have to believe, because it is the only thing that makes sense, deeply, intuitively, that we are all part of one thing, something real, not constructed, it made us, in this world, the real world, we are both connected and independent, fulfilling our own destinies as part of a larger whole.

we do have power.

I feel so much gratitude. As an ally, I appreciate the opportunity to do this kind of reclaiming work in a context where my expectation of myself is to be real and present and not the center of attention. It gives me the opportunity to face my own ego and reflect on the anxieties that hold it in place.

There have been times when I felt confused about my role within the group - as the only white person, what is the reason for my inclusion? I have struggled with the feeling of being "the only one" - both the positive and negative connotations of it. On one hand, the ego-centered feeling that I must be so special to be the only white person. On the other hand, the self-denying feeling that I can't let my perspective take up space because this space isn't for me. Nobody was explaining to me how to deal with this or think about it - the white baby* wasn't being kept in check, disciplined and coddled - it is my job to look at my own self in relationship to these questions.

(*I think a lot of times, whiteness shows up as a very young, scared, entitled baby)

As a group we talked about being allies to each other - we all experience both privilege and oppression, and there are other things going on in our group too in terms of poverty, disability, region, etc. We also talked about being allies to ourselves - if you can be there for yourself, you can be there for anybody.

This conversation made my heart expand, giving me more space for my humanity. It's so easy to criticize myself - I notice how I sometimes use this voice of authority, or how I feel most comfortable when I have all the information. I see the ways I am used to controlling a project, even if I don't want to. It makes me feel alone, like everything is riding on me, like it will all fall apart if I don't hold all the pieces together. That is an old, traumatized feeling from childhood, the belief that things must be forced, because I am so small and powerless I have to push hard to get what I need, or what is expected of me.

To be an ally I have to turn my attention inward towards the part of me who holds the anxiety. What am I worried about? Standing out. Not mattering. Only being wanted for one skill or ability. I know those messages aren't coming from the group. I am here to be whole, present, an important part of the group but not the focus. My own issues within this white-supremacist and ableist society make me feel like being myself and being open is not enough - like there's a secret hierarchy to learn and work up through. That is programming that I am relieved to uncover and undo.

The reality is I just need to be myself, which is empathic, organizationally minded, excited about synthesis of ideas and visions, willing to be challenged and stick it out, dedicated to deep, old truths. I give myself permission to let this be enough, and release my fears of not being good enough. With that release, I become more focused on the work of my true heart - racial justice, for deep, transformative healing, for true t'shuvah and tikkun olam (healing and repairing the world).

THE MOURNERS' KADDISH

קדיש יתום

It is customary for mourners, and those observing Yahrzeit, to stand for Kaddish. In some congregations everyone rises.

יְהוָה יִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֹה רַבָּא בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי כְּרָא כְּרַעוּתָהּ וְיִמְלִיךְ
מְלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֻלְמָא וּבְזִמְנָא
קָרִיב וְאַמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהוָה שְׁמֹה רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי עֻלְמָא:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה
וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֹה זָקֻן שֶׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא

לְעֻלְמָא לְעֻלְמָא מְכַל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא מְשֻׁבְּחָתָא וּנְחֻמָּתָא דְאַמְרוּ
בְּעֻלְמָא וְאַמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהוָה שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַמְרוּ
אָמֵן:

עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל
כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל וְאַמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Yitgadal veyitkadesh shemey raba
be'alma di vera hirutey veyamlif malhutey
behayehon uvyomeyehon uvhayey dehol beyt yisra'el
ba'gala uvizman kariv ve'imru amen.

Yehey shemey raba mevarah le'alam ulalmey almaya.

Yitbarah veyishtabah veyitpa'ar veyitromam veyitmasey
veyit-hadar veyitaleh veyit-halal shemey dekudsha berih hu
le'ela le'ela mikol birhata veshirata
tushbehata venehemata da'amiran be'alma ve'imru amen.

Yehey shelama raba min shemaya vehayim aleynu ve'al kol
yisra'el ve'imru amen.

Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya'aseh shalom aleynu ve'al kol
yisra'el ve'al kol yoshvey tevel ve'imru amen.

BREATH

Breathing into the Body
Envision your places of home and the connect bridge



2) Now,
Put one hand
on your belly
and breath
all the way
into your
lower abdomen
Feel your
breathing
roll up
from
your
belly and into your lungs
and back as you exhale
feel breath

1) Lay down on Your back
Put one hand
on you chest and
Breathe Deeply
into your lungs
Slowly Exhale
Do this repeatedly
until you can feel
The full Strength
expansion of your
Lungs and LifeForce
Allow this breath to
Move up from your chest
into your neck and face
feel the muscles in your face
Relax, open your mouth slightly
let your tongue be heavy and
relaxed. Make a sound when
You exhale Like "haaaa or huuu"
Do this at least three times

