

Return to Daylight

אור חדש

Defending and Restoring Liberty Under Siege

www.orhadashusa.org



"As nightfall does not come all at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there is a twilight when everything remains seemingly unchanged. And it is in such a twilight that we all must be most aware of change in the air -- however slight -- lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness."

----- Justice William O. Douglas

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The mission of Return to Daylight/Or Hadash USA is to build a network of Jewish Americans who:

- § are aware of their stake in democracy and democratic institutions in America,*
- § are aware of the current peril and erosion our democratic institutions face;*
- § are ready to take action in support of those institutions.*

Ashamnu: A Call For Collective T'shuva

This is a plan for a presentation, designed to take approximately one hour, on the practice of torture by the U.S. Government, and our responsibility as Jews and as Americans to do collective *t'shuva* for our complicity in the practice. Robin and Joel will be presenting it as part of the Selichot teachings at Congregation Netivot Shalom in Berkeley, CA. The best time to present this workshop is of course during the Yamim Noraim, which we can define broadly as any time between Selichot and Hosha'na Rabba, but of course if time does not permit, the workshop can be given at any time.

For our Netivot Shalom presentation, Joel and Robin will begin by viewing a 5 minute DVD excerpt on US-sponsored torture, produced by the ACLU, Amnesty International, and other human rights organizations. Then, looking at the *Vidui*, the collective confessional that is central to High Holy Day liturgy, and looking at Rabbinic texts and other traditional material, we will explore the Jewish imperative to hold ourselves responsible collectively for these wrongs done to others in our name.

Below is a modification of our presentation outline, designed to be more "generic" and enable you to use whatever materials may be on hand.

#	Item
1	Read “New Unetaneh Tokef for a Time of Terror” from Or Hadash USA, <i>up to</i> “Each day with our silence we allow it to be written, each day with our complicity we allow it to be sealed:”
2	Switch to text or A/V on torture. One A/V source is a DVD titled “Outlawed”, in both a 26-minute and a 5-minute version. Any text, description, record, or testimony of torture practices can be used here. Physicians for Human Rights has a June 2008 report titled “Broken Laws, Broken Lives: Evidence of Medical Evidence of Torture by US Personnel and Its Impact”, available at its Web site. We will also soon have a list of resources available at www.orhadashusa.org .
3	Continue reading “New Unetaneh Tokef for a Time of Terror” until the end. You may note that the evidence is accumulating, both of acts of torture and of its having been condoned or ordered at the highest levels of government.
4	Present, read, or discuss “Selected sources on collective t’shuvah”
5	Hand out selections from Vidui (Ashamnu and selections from Al Chet). The Al Chet selections we have chosen are: b’yod’im uv’lo yod’im -- which we choose to translate as “by knowing and by not knowing”; immutz halev (hardening our heart); b’galui uvasater (openly and in secret), kashiut ‘oref (stiffening necks), sinat chinnam (baseless hatred). Feel free to add or subtract from what we have provided. Participants will work in chevruta or small groups on these texts, examining how each piece of the text does or does not relate to rendition and torture.
6	Discuss in main group the results of small group/chevruta work
7	Group discussion: what are ways we can do collective t’shuva?
8	Action/t’shuva items
	a)

Materials needed:

To use/hand out:

- 1) “New Unetaneh Tokef for a Time of Terror” from Or Hadash USA
- 2) “Selected sources on collective t’shuvah”
- 3) Version of Ashamnu + excerpts from Al Chet
- 4) [NRCAT pledge/petition] Anything for the Executive Order project, including the petition, is here: <http://www.rhr-na.org/story/declaration-of-principles>

To make available to take home (supplemental materials)

- 1) Shavuot handout
- 2) Prayer for voting
- 3) Miriam Margles, “Handling the Truth”