

# ANTI-RACIST HIGH HOLY DAY RESOURCES

*from the Not Free to Desist team*

## PETITIONARY BLESSINGS FOR COLLECTIVE LIBERATION

The Al Cheyt is a longer confessional prayer communally recited only on Yom Kippur. “Chet-Tet, Cheyt” is an archery term. It is commonly mistranslated as “sin.” Rather, it means to miss the mark. Which is good, because we can adjust our aim and try again.

We recite Al Cheyt (we missed the mark), along with Vidui (confession) / Ashamnu (we have gone astray), during Yom Kippur as part of a public confession of our communal transgressions during the past year. Al Cheyt reminds us that we are not only accountable not just for our personal actions but also responsible for the actions of our community at large.

The following is an “Al Cheyt” recitation inspired by James Baldwin; Eddie S. Glaude Jr., author of “Begin Again”; and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel’s 1963 speech “The Religious Basis of Equal Opportunity.” This was curated by the team behind Not Free to Desist, an open letter by Jews of Color and Allies to the Jewish Community to reimagine its commitment to racial justice.

## ABOUT NOT FREE TO DESIST

Not Free to Desist is dedicated to bringing about an anti-racist Jewish community. NFD envisions a world in which all Jewish institutions and funders make a commitment to the concrete racial justice goals as outlined in the 7 obligations of the Not Free to Desist letter. With a guiding focus of centering Jews of color in the work, and a commitment to anti-racist policies and practices, NFD seeks to help organizations achieve long-term structural change and a more just allocation of resources.

## AL CHEYT FOR OUR TIMES

*A resource from the Not Free to Desist team*

**Al Cheyt**, for being part of “a profoundly racist society, and hid[ing] behind our innocence to keep us from confronting that fact.” \*

**Al Cheyt**, for being complicit “in a white America that slammed the door shut on the opportunity for the fundamental transformation of the civil rights movement.” †

**Al Cheyt**, “for denying the ugliness of who we are as a nation and refusing to tell ourselves the truth about what we have done and what we are doing.” †

**Al Cheyt**, for refusing to “decide whether this country will truly be a multiracial democracy or whether to merely tinker around the edges of our problems once again and remain decidedly racist and unequal.” †

**Al Cheyt**, “for doubling down on the ugliness of whiteness, in the moments where the country seems to be on the precipice of change.” \*

@notfreetodesist // notfreetodesist.org

**Al Cheyt**, for not listening when Heschel proclaimed, “We have failed to use the avenues open to us to educate the hearts and minds of men, to identify ourselves with those who are underprivileged.” †

**Al Cheyt**, for forgetting that Heschel said, “We, too, are either ministers of the sacred or slaves of evil.” §

**Al Cheyt**, for ignoring his warning, “There is an evil which most of us condone and are even guilty of: indifference to evil. We remain neutral, impartial, and not easily moved by the wrongs done to other people.” §

**Al Cheyt**, for turning our eyes away from the truth, “Indifference to evil is more insidious than evil itself ... An honest examination of the moral state of our society will disclose: Some are guilty but all are responsible.” §

**Al Cheyt**, for not “Tak[ing] account and ask[ing]: What have I done today to alleviate the anguish, to mitigate the evil, to prevent humiliation?” §

**Al Cheyt**, for not recognizing, “Repentance is more than contrition and remorse for sins, for harms done. Repentance means a new insight, a new spirit. It also means a course of action.” †

[RETURN TO MENU](#)



[@notfreetodesist // notfreetodesist.org](#)

\* [Q&A: Professor Eddie S. Glaude Jr.](#)

† [James Baldwin Insisted We Tell the Truth About This Country. The Truth Is, We've Been Here Before](#)

‡ [Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, "Religion and Race" \(14 January 1963\)](#)

§ [The Insecurity of Freedom by Abraham Joshua Heschel](#)