

TIKKUN OLAM BOOK CLUB #3

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A Mind Spread Out on the Ground

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Questions for Discussion

*Haudenosaunee have always believed in the principle of the seven generations. When you make a decision, you must consciously think about what effects that decision could have on your descendants seven generations in the future. This world does not belong to you; you are merely borrowing it from the coming faces. Epigenetics seems to predicate that philosophy on the genetic level. Your decisions and traumas are never solely yours alone, or even yours and your children's. Your decisions and traumas mark every subsequent generation after you, creating ripples in the future that can't always be anticipated and can never be controlled.*

- Alicia Elliott, *A Mind Spread out on the Ground*

The Jewish tradition, a tradition once rooted in the land, voices in different formulations something strikingly similar. For instance, in the 13 Attributes of God we collectively recite repeatedly on our High Holidays:

*God, Compassionate and Gracious, Slow to anger, Abounding in Kindness and Faithfulness, Extending Kindness to the thousandth generation, Forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin; yet God does not remit all punishment, but visits the iniquity of parents upon children and the children's children upon the third and fourth generations.*

- Exodus 34: 6-7

1. When we think of Indigenous peoples, as individuals and as nations, what can we learn from intergenerational trauma?

Why do settlers often blame individuals without looking at the forms of oppression that their nations have endured?

What can we learn about our own intergenerational trauma as individuals and as part of the Jewish people?

2. When we contemplate Tikkun - healing or repair - for Indigenous communities; for settlers acting out our own oppression, both unconscious and overt; and finally for the land itself, what is the way forward?
3. How might we begin to "decolonize our minds"? What does Alicia Elliott suggest about the power of love to heal intergenerational trauma?