

Tashlich

תַּשְׁלִיךְ

We come to this body of water today in search of a means to enhance the sanctity of the High Holy Days. Tashlich is a physical embodiment of the teshuvah process. We reach deep into our pockets and also reach deep into ourselves. We cast away bread crumbs that symbolize the things we are ready to release, the things which no longer serve us, the things that feel old and dried out.

Tashlich is not just a renewal of our souls in relation to sin and repentance; it is also a time to clean out that which has been disturbing us and weighing us down.

Hashivenu

Ha-shi-vei-nu ha-shi-vei-nu
 V'na-shu-vah, v'na-shu-vah
 Cha-deish cha-deish ya-mei-nu k'ke-dem.

Turn us toward You, God
 And we will return.
 Renew our days as of old.

הַשִּׁיבֵנו הַשִּׁיבֵנו יי אֱלֹהִים
 וְנָשׁוּבָה, וְנָשׁוּבָה
 חַדֵּשׁ חַדֵּשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם.

Avinu Malkeinu

A-vi-nu mal-kei-nu cho-nei-nu va-a-nei-nu
 Ki ein ba-nu ma-a-sim,
 A-sei i-ma-nu ts'da-kah va-che-sed
 V'ho-shi-ei-nu

Avinu Malkeinu, have mercy on us and answer us, for our deeds are insufficient;
 Deal with us charitably and lovingly, and redeem us.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ חַנּוּן וְעַנּוּן,
 כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים,
 עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחַסֵּד
 וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ

מִי־אֵל כְּמוֹךָ נִשְׂא עוֹן וְעֵבֶר עַל־פְּשָׁע לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נִחַלְתּוֹ לְאֶהְיֶיךָ לְעַד אָפוּ
 כִּי־חַפֵּץ חַסֵּד הוּא: יָשׁוּב יִרְחַמֵּנוּ יִכַּבֵּשׁ עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְתִשְׁלַיֵךְ בְּמַצְלוֹת יָם כָּל־חַטָּאתָם:
 תִּתֵּן אֲמֶת לְיַעֲקֹב חַסֵּד לְאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתֵּינוּ מִיְמֵי קֶדֶם:

Who God, is like You, pardoning sin, passing over the wrongdoing of Israel, the remnant of Your heritage? You do not stay angry forever, for You delight in mercy. You will again have compassion upon us and will overcome our shortcomings; and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show truth to Jacob and loving mercy to Abraham, as You have sworn to our ancestors from days of old.

(Micah 7:18-20)

Some of us may have come today wondering if we could indeed rid ourselves of what burdens us. As we leave this place, let us feel cleansed and healed. Let the purity of the water wash away the guilt for our misdeeds and shake evil from the world. Just as Adam was created at this time, so we are reborn and renewed. "Since you came for judgment on Rosh Hashanah and emerged exonerated, I consider it as if you have been created again as a new creature!" (Jerusalem Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 4:8, 59c)

[adapted from *Approaching the High Holy Days*, by Rabbi Reuven Hammer]

I. Standing by the water,
Emptying our pockets
Of the remaining crumbs of sin,
We turn to You, O God,
Creator of heaven and earth,
Creator of the water.
We pour out –
Like water –
The confession of our sin.
Hear our prayer, and
Tashlich, Cast all our sins into the water's depths.

II. As fish in water
Are ever in danger
Of being caught
And then devoured,
So are we in peril
Constantly.
We turn to You,
Our only sure protection.
Shelter us, and
Tashlich, Cast all our sins into the water's depths.

III. Let these waters be a token
Of Your covenant promise:
“As I swore that the waters of Noah
Never again would flood the earth,
So I swear that I will not
Be angry with you or rebuke you.
For the mountains may move
And the hills be shaken,
My steadfast love
Shall never move from you,
Nor My covenant of *shalom* be shaken,
Says God, Who takes you back in love.” *(Isaiah 54:9-10)*
Tashlich, Cast all our sins into the water's depths.

*Take time now to reflect on that which you wish to cast away on this New Year.
When you are ready, cast your bread crumbs into the water.*

A Tashlich Prayer

1. Let us cast away the sin of deception, so that we will mislead no one in word or deed, nor pretend to be what we are not.
2. Let us cast away the sin of vain ambition, which prompts us to strive for goals which bring neither true fulfillment nor genuine contentment.
3. Let us cast away the sin of stubbornness, so that we will neither persist in foolish habits nor fail to acknowledge our will to change.
4. Let us cast away the sin of envy, so that we will neither be consumed by desire for what we lack nor grow unmindful of the blessings which are already ours.
5. Let us cast away the sin of selfishness, which keeps us from enriching our lives through wider concerns, and greater sharing, and from reaching out in love to other human beings.
6. Let us cast away the sin of indifference, so that we may be sensitive to the sufferings of others and responsive to the needs of our people everywhere.
7. Let us cast away the sins of pride and arrogance, so that we may worship God and serve God's purposes in humility and in truth.

[from *Mahzor Hadash*, edited by Rabbi Sidney Greenberg & Rabbi Jonathan D. Levine]

Most of what we do on Rosh Hashanah depends on verbal expression or on listening. Tashlich, the symbolic casting away of our sins, constitutes one of the few active rituals of the day.

Tashlich has been understood in a variety of ways. Throwing bread into the water can be understood as a symbolic casting away of our sins, marking the purification that takes place on these days. Moreover, just as fish eat our bread and what is cast away becomes nourishment, so we pray that even our sins will eventually be turned to good effect in the world. Lastly, just as the waters of the sea go around the world, so too can we, at this moment, become conscious of how we are connected to all that is around us.

[from *Mahzor Lev Shalem*, Rabbinical Assembly]