



Do It Yourself Tashlich:

A Rosh Hashanah Ritual to Cast Off Mistakes

Adapted by Rabbi Daniel Graber from Rabbi Robin Nafshi and WikiHow

For health and safety, everyone is strongly encouraged to do tashlich on their own this year

1 Look for a natural body of water that you can access easily. *Tashlich* involves casting off your sins into a body of water like a river, spring, lake, pond, or well. Most people prefer natural, flowing bodies of water because it gives the effect of your sins being swept away by the current.

- It's acceptable to perform *Tashlich* even if you can see the water only from a distance.
- If you can, find a body of water with fish living in it. Fish have a special symbolism for *Tashlich*. Just as fish can suddenly find themselves caught in nets, so too do we humans sometimes unintentionally find ourselves caught in bad habits or situations that lead us to act in ways we regret.

2 Go to the water on Rosh Hashanah. Since the first day of Rosh Hashanah is Shabbat, this year the ideal time for *Tashlich* is the second day of Rosh Hashanah. If you're unable to perform the ceremony on Rosh Hashanah itself, or if the area near the water is too crowded then to allow for social distancing, you can still do *Tashlich* any day during the Days of Awe until Yom Kippur.

3 Collect twigs, stones, leaves, and other natural materials. While many people are accustomed to throwing breadcrumbs in the water for *Tashlich*, bread can be harmful for birds and fish. Instead, you might collect natural materials from the ecosystem. Bring a bag, and you can collect the items on your meditative walk (#6). Other eco-friendly alternatives include birdseed, cooked rice, or lettuce.

4 Examine what you've struggled with in the past year. The High Holy Days are a period of introspection, and *Tashlich* invites you to reflect on your behavior over the last year. The word for "sin" or "mistake" in Hebrew comes from the language of

archery to sin is to miss the target. All of us have times - many times! - when we fail to live up to our best intentions. Whether you "missed the mark" by acting knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally, don't be afraid to be honest with yourself during this period of review.

5 *Take a meditative walk.* After you've thought about your actions over the past year, take some time to consider how you can improve in the upcoming year. Many Jews recommend taking a walk and meditating to think of ways that you can change your behavior. Keep in mind, however, that the goal of *Tashlich* is to move forward in the year, rather than to dwell on the past. You might also use this time to collect the small rocks, leaves, acorns, twigs, and other natural materials that you will cast into the water.

6 *Read or sing a prayer.* On the next page, you can find some Biblical and modern prayers and texts to choose from. The source passage for *Tashlich* comes from the last verses of the prophet Micah. None of these prayers are required, but they might help you find focus and intention (*kavanna*) for *Tashlich*.

7 *Offer a prayer about your hopes for the year.* Talk to God out loud or in your head about your past year and how you plan to do better. Try to be as honest as possible about what has happened during the year and how you want to improve. If you need help with words, try answering some of these questions:

- Did I use my time wisely?
- Was I there for people who needed me? Do my relationships reflect *k'dushah*, holiness?
- The kind deed: did I perform it or postpone it? The unnecessary word: Did I say it or hold it back?
- Did I acquire only possessions? Or did I acquire insights and knowledge as well?
- Did I live fully? If not, how can I?

8 *Cast your sins into the body of water.* After your prayer, reach into your pockets and grab the stones, twigs, or seeds, and throw them into the water. When you let go of them, breathe out and watch them wash away. Only do this when you feel ready. It might take you longer than some other people to prepare for this moment, but don't feel rushed.

Prayers for Tashlich

God will take us back in love, God will cover up our iniquities
You will hurl all our sins into the depths of the sea. *(Micah 7:18-19)*

Cast away from yourselves all your transgressions, and create within yourselves a new
heart and a new spirit! *(Ezekiel 18:31)*

Here I am again
ready to let go of my mistakes.

Help me to release myself
from all the ways I've missed the mark.

Help me to stop carrying
the karmic baggage of my poor choices.

As I cast this bread upon the waters
Lift my troubles off my shoulders.

Help me to know that last year is over,
washed away like crumbs in the current.

Open my heart to blessing and gratitude
Renew my soul as the dew renews the
grasses.

(Rabbi Rachel Barenblat)

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְנָשׁוּבָה חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם
*Hashiveinu, hashiveinu, Adonai Eilecha
V'nashuva, v'nashuva!*
Chadeish, chadeish yameinu k'kedem.
*(Return us to You, Eternal One, and we
will return! Renew our days as days of old. –
Lamentations 5:22)*

Return again, return again
Return to the land of your soul
Return to who you are
Return to what you are
Return to where you are
Born and reborn again

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ חַנּוּן וְעֲנֻנוּ כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים
עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ
Avinu Malkeinu

*Chaneinu va'aneinu, ki ein banu ma'asim
Asei imanu tzedakah v'chesed, v'hosheinu*

(Avinu Malkeinu, our Parent, our Ruler, be gracious and answer us, for our deeds have
earned us little merit. Treat us generously and with kindness, and be our Help.)