



Etz Chayim Tashlich Service

COMPILED BY RABBI ALLISON RH CONYER



Etz Chayim Progressive Synagogue
Bentleigh

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Adapted from Tashlich services of Beth El Synagogue and Congregation Beth Shalom
<http://www.bethshalomwilmington.org/chaipod/resources/tashlich.pdf>
<http://www.betheldurham.org/docs/tashlich.pdf>

Tashlich: Casting Away Our Sins

The origins of this custom are uncertain; it does not appear in the Talmud and it seems to have begun in the Middle Ages. Tashlich is a remarkable ceremony – symbolic and concrete all at the same time. Through this ritual, we express not only our desire to be free from sin but our continuing hope that we will be forgiven for past misdeeds. On the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah -- or on the second day, if the first day is a Shabbat -- it is customary to go to a flowing body of water and to recite prayers while "casting" our sins (represented by bread crumbs) into the water.

We call it TASHLICH, meaning "you shall cast". As we read in Micah: "You will cast (Tashlich) all your sins into the depths of the sea" (7:19). As we cast our sins into the water, we look at the water and try to remember the creation of the world by God, our Creator. We think about God and ask forgiveness for the things we have done wrong.

The Fish and the Sea

It is customary to go to a river or sea where there are fish, for as fish are suddenly caught in a net, so are we caught in the severe net of divine judgement; and gazing at the water, we contemplate *Teshuvah*. As we shake out our pockets, we symbolically transfer our wrongdoings to the fish! And, as our crumbs feed the fish in the sea, we remember that just as fish have no eyebrows and their eyes are always open, so may the eye of God always be open for our benefit. It has also been suggested that we be compared to fish caught in the net of divine judgment. May God always watch over us and may we always be worthy of God's devotion.

The custom of going to a body of water on Rosh Hashanah is a symbolic allusion, for the waters which now seem to be at this place were not here before and will not remain afterward. So, if the sinner says to himself or herself: "I will not repeat my sin; my behaviour will change", the sin, like the waters, will move on.

Tashlich Customs

While it is traditional to shake out the hems of one's clothing to ensure that all "sins" have been disposed of, Tashlich ceremonies differ all over the world. The Jews of Kurdistan had a custom to recite the Tashlich prayer near a river and then to jump into the water and swim around, instead of only shaking out the hems of their clothing.

Tashlich Reflections

When we really begin a new year it is decided,
And when we actually repent it is determined:

Who shall be truly alive and who shall merely exist;

Who shall be happy and who shall be miserable;

*Who shall attain fulfilment in their days
And who shall not attain fulfilment in their days;*

Who shall be tormented by the fire of ambition
And who shall be overcome by the waters of failure;

*Who shall be pierced by the sharp sword of envy
And who shall be torn by the wild beast of resentment;*

Who shall hunger for companionship
And who shall thirst for approval;

*Who shall be shattered by the earthquake of social change
And who shall be plagued by the pressures of conformity;*

Who shall be strangled by insecurity
And who shall be stoned into submission;

*Who shall be content with their lot
And who shall wander in search of satisfaction;*

Who shall be serene and who shall be distraught;

Who shall be at ease and who shall be afflicted with anxiety;

Who shall be poor in their own eyes
And who shall be rich in tranquillity;

*Who shall be brought low with futility
And who shall be exalted through achievement.*

But repentance, prayer, and good deeds
have the power to change the character of our lives.

*Let us resolve to repent, to pray, and to do good deeds
so that we may begin a truly new year.*

Selected Memory

We ask for a piece of sand
and God gives us a beach.

*We ask for a drop of water
and God gives us an ocean.*

We ask for time
and God gives us the bond of everlasting life.

*And it is so easy for us
to fall in love with the gift*

and forget the Giver.

Author: Edward Farrell

An Ancient Prayer

Out of the depths I call to You, O God. Hear my voice; let your ears be attentive to my supplicating voice. If you, O God, kept strict account of iniquities, who could live on? But with You there is forgiveness. I look for You. My whole being hopes; I wait for Your word. My soul waits for You, more eagerly than watchmen for the dawn. *O Israel, put your hope in Adonai for with Adonai there is kindness; with God there is great saving power. It is Adonai who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.*

Psalm 130

The Message of Prophet Micah

Today we come to this body of water to perform the Tashlich ceremony, seeking symbolically to "cast away" our accumulated sins and transgressions so that we may purify our hearts and our souls, as the new year begins.

מי אל כְּמוֹךָ נִשְׂא עֵוֹן וְעִבֵר עַל פְּשַׁע לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נַחֲלָתוֹ לֹא הִחְזִיק לְעַד אִפּוֹ כִּי הִפִּיץ חֶסֶד הוּא:
יָשׁוּב יִרְחַמֵּנוּ יִכְבֹּשׁ עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְתִשְׁלִיךְ בְּמַצְלוֹת יָם כָּל חַטָּאתָם:
תִּתֵּן אֱמֶת לְיַעֲקֹב חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתֵּינוּ מִיְמֵי קֶדֶם

Who is like You, Adonai? You forgive iniquity and pass over transgressions in your people. You do not retain anger forever, for You delight in kindness. You will again show us mercy and subdue our iniquities; You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show kindness to Jacob and mercy to Abraham, as You did promise our ancestors of old.

Micah 7:18-20

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.

Let us cast away the sin of vain ambition, which prompts us to strive for goals which bring neither true fulfillment nor genuine contentment.

Let us cast away the sin of stubbornness, so that we will neither persists in foolish habits nor fail to acknowledge our will to change.

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.

Let us cast away the sin of selfishness, which keeps us from enriching our lives through wider concerns and great sharing and from reaching out in love to other human beings.

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 people everywhere.

Let us cast away the sin of pride and arrogance, so that we can worship God and serve God's purpose in humility and truth.

Now take some time privately to reflect on your own transgressions and cast them out into the waters.

Silent Reflection

The goal of human life, our ancestors said,
is Tikkun Olam,
the repairing of our seemingly fragmented world.
Fragmentation arises
when we fail to recognize ourselves
as unique but transient
expressions of God.
In our mad struggle for separateness,
permanence, and eternal life,
we imagine ourselves to be free
from the rest of rhythms of the universe
and spend the rest of our lives
frantically shoring up
this illusion in the face of a totally
indifferent reality.
It is as if we were given the task
of filling a bucket with sea water
only to discover that the bucket's bottom
is poked through with holes.
If we run swiftly enough
we can maintain the illusion of a filling bucket
by pouring water in at the top
faster than it is running out the bottom.
Beth El Tashlich Service page 3
But should we rest even a moment,
the illusion is shattered
and our labors are in vain.
So we don't rest,
straining ourselves to the limit
in a mad struggle to turn the Universe inside out.
It can't be done, but we die trying,
heroes in a drama no one understands.
Yet we've really been dead all along:
maintaining a lie
at the expense of living the truth.
Tikkun in the restoration of truth,
of Unity;
the reclamation of shalom,
Peace.
Tikkun is the Wave awakening to the Ocean,
the Piece awakening to the Puzzle,
the Part awakening to the Whole
and Holiness.

Adapted from Rami Shapiro, *Restoration*

Richard Israel's Crumb List

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Taking a few crumbs to Tashlich from whatever old bread is in the house lacks subtlety, nuance and religious sensitivity. I would suggest that we can do better. Instead:

- | | |
|--|--|
| For ordinary sins, use - White Bread | For racism - Crackers |
| For exotic sins - French Bread | For unfairly up-braiding others -
Challah |
| For particularly dark sins -
Pumpnickel | For being holier-than-thou - Bagels |
| For complex sins - Multi-grain | For provocative dressing - Wonton
Wrappers |
| For twisted sins - Pretzels | For indecent photography - Cheese
Cake |
| For sins of indecision - Waffles | For snobbery - Upper Crusts |
| For sins committed in haste - Matzah | For trashing the environment -
Dumplings |
| For sins committed in less than
eighteen minutes - Shmurah Matzah | For being hypercritical - Pan Cakes |
| For sins of chutzpah - Fresh Bread | For the sin of laziness - Any Very
Long Loaf |
| For substance abuse/marijuana -
Stoned Wheat | For political skullduggery - Bismarcks |
| For substance abuse/heavy drugs -
Poppy Seed | For over-eating - Stuffing Bread |
| For arson - Toast | For gambling - Fortune Cookies |
| For timidity - Milk Toast | For pride - Puff Pastry |
| For high-handedness - Napoleons | For being snappish - Ginger Bread |
| For being sulky - Sourdough | For recurring slip ups - Banana Bread |
| For not giving full value - Short
bread | For davening off tune - Flat Bread |
| For silliness - Nut Bread | For impetuosity - Quick Bread |
| For jingoism - Yankee Doodles | For silliness - Nut Bread |
| For telling bad jokes - Corn Bread | For auto theft - Caraway |
| For being money-hungry - Enriched
Bread or Raw Dough | For risking one's life unnecessarily -
Hero Bread |
| For telling small lies - Fudge | For excessive use of irony - Rye
Bread |
| For war-mongering - Kaiser Rolls | |
| For promiscuity - Hot Buns | |

We come back together.

At the Waters' Edge

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה | אֵלֶיךָ וְנִשׁוּבָה חֲדָשׁ יִמְיֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם:

Ha-shiveynu Adonai aylecha v'na-shuva, chadeysh yameynu k'kedem.
Turn us back to You and we shall return.

Avinu Malkeinu

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ.

Avinu Malkeinu, she-ma ko-lei-nu
Eternal, our God, hear our voice.

Avinu Malkeinu, we have sinned before you.
Eternal, our God, have mercy upon us and upon our children.

Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us for blessing in the book of life.
Eternal, our God, grant unto us a year of happiness.

Avinu Malkeinu, Be gracious and answer us, for we have not done enough good deeds. Please love us, be generous with us, and help us.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! חַנְּנוּ וְעֲנֵנוּ, כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים, עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה
וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

Avinu Malkeinu Chanenu va'aneinu (2x) ke ein banu ma'asim.
Aseh imanu tzdakah vachessed -
Aseh imanu tzdakah vachessed, v'hoshi'enu. (repeat)

May we all write our own life stories where good triumphs over evil, joy over sadness, hope over helplessness and fear.

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תִּכְתְּבוּ

L'Shanah Tovah Tikateivu