

YOUR PERSONAL GUIDE
TO
TASHLICH



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INTRODUCTION. Tashlikh is a ceremony performed near a body of water, preferably one that flows into a larger body of water. It takes place on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, except when the first day falls on Shabbat, in which case it takes place on the second day. The origin of Tashlikh is shrouded in mystery. The first direct mention can be found in the halakhic work of Rabbi Jacob Moellin (Maharil, 15th century), who approved of

the custom of going to the water to recite particular biblical verses and prayers on Rosh Hashanah, but specified that it is inappropriate to throw bread in the water to represent the sins that are being cast away. Clearly, both the custom and the bread-throwing preceded him; but we do not know when this tradition began.

The ceremony of Tashlikh survived and grew in popularity, despite significant rabbinic opposition. Some rabbis opposed Tashlikh because it makes the complex process of separating sin from our lives seem too facile, as if it is simply a matter of casting bread from our hands. But Tashlikh survived because it fulfilled a popular need.

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

Tashlikh 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

Before the bread is cast into the water, the following may be recited:

מִי־אֵל כְּמוֹף נִשָּׂא עֵוֹן וְעֵבֶר עַל־פֶּשַׁע לְשֵׁאֲרִית נִחַלְתּוּ,
 לֹא הֶחֱזִיק לְעַד אַפּוֹ כִּי חִפֵּץ חֶסֶד הוּא. יָשׁוּב יִרְחַמְנוּ
 יִכְבֹּשׁ עֲוֹנֹתֵינוּ וְתִשְׁלִיךְ בְּמַצְלוֹת יָם כָּל־חַטָּאתָם. תִּתֵּן
 אֲמֶת לִיעֲקֹב חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבּוֹתֵינוּ
 מִיָּמֵי קֹדֶם. מִכָּה ז' יח-כ

The following may be added:

קִרְאתִי מִצָּרָה לִי אֶל־יְהוָה וַיַּעֲנֵנִי מִבֶּטֶן שְׂאוּל שְׂוַעֲתִי
 שָׁמַעְתָּ קוֹלִי. וְתִשְׁלִיכְנִי מִצּוֹלָה בְּלִבֵּב יָמִים וְנִהַר
 יִסְבְּבֵנִי כָּל־מִשְׁבְּרֵיךְ וְגִלְיָךְ עָלַי עֲבְרוּ. וְאַנִּי אֲמַרְתִּי
 נִגְרַשְׁתִּי מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ אַךְ אוֹסִיף לְהִבִּיט אֶל־הֵיכַל קֹדֶשְׁךָ.
 אֲפֹפוּנֵי מַיִם עַד־נִפְשׁ תְּהוּם יִסְבְּבֵנִי סוּף חֲבוּשׁ לְרֵאשִׁי.
 לְקַצְבֵי הָרִים יִרְדְּתִי הָאָרֶץ בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ בְּעַדֵי לְעוֹלָם וְתַעַל
 מִשְׁחַת חַיֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי. בְּהִתְעַטֵּף עָלַי נֶפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה
 זְכַרְתִּי וְתָבוֹא אֵלַיךְ תִּפְלְתִי אֶל־הֵיכַל קֹדֶשְׁךָ. יוֹנָה ב ג-ח

After the bread is cast into the water, one of the following may be recited:

א
 לֹא־יִרְעוּ וְלֹא־יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל־הָר קֹדֶשִׁי כִּי־מְלֶאכֶה הָאָרֶץ
 יִדְעָה אֶת־יְהוָה כַּמַּיִם לַיָּם מְכַסִּים. ישעיה יא ט

ב
 כִּי־מֵי נַח זֹאת לִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מֵעַבְר מִי־נַח עוֹד עַל־
 הָאָרֶץ כֵּן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מִקִּצְף עָלֶיךָ וּמִגְעַר־כָּף. כִּי הֵהָרִים
 יִמּוּשׁוּ וְהַגְּבָעוֹת תִּמּוּטֵינָה וְחֶסְדֵי מֵאֲתָךְ לֹא־יִמוּשׁוּ
 וּבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי לֹא תִמוּט אֲמַר מִרְחֻמְךָ יְהוָה. ישעיה נד ט-י

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.

TASHLIKH

The Sea

Throwing bread into the water and reciting the biblical passage mentioning "the deep" is a reminder of the deep out of which the days of creation were formed. Thus, by going to the sea on Rosh Hashanah, we celebrate creation and are led to think of our own place in God's scheme of creation. When we contemplate these matters and repent from our sins, then they are truly thrown away, into the water, and we feel renewed on this Day of Judgment.

—MOSES ISSERLES

Before the bread is cast into the water, the following may be recited:

Is there any divinity save You who forgives the sins and pardons the transgressions of the remnant, Your people? You do not maintain anger forever, for You delight in love. You will return to us compassionately, overcoming the consequences of our sin, hurling our sins into the depths of the sea. You will keep faith with Jacob, showing enduring love to Abraham, as You promised our ancestors in days of old. *Micah 7:18-20*

The following may be added:

In my trouble I called to ADONAI, who answered me; from the belly of Sheol I cried out, and You heard my voice. You cast me into the depths, into the heart of the sea, the floods engulfed me; all Your breakers and billows swept over me. I thought I was driven away out of Your sight: Would I ever gaze again upon Your holy Temple? The waters closed in over me, the deep engulfed me. Weeds twined around my head. I sank to the base of the mountains; the bars of the earth closed upon me forever. Yet You brought my life up from the pit, O my God ADONAI! When my life was ebbing away, I called ADONAI to mind; and my prayer came before You, into Your holy Temple. *Jonah 2:3-8*

After the bread is cast into the water, one of the following may be recited:

נ

None shall hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the love of ADONAI shall fill the earth as the waters fill the sea.

Isaiah 11:9

ב

For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; for just as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more flood the earth; so have I sworn that I will not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. For the mountains may move and the hills shake; but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall my covenant of peace be taken away—says ADONAI, who has taken you back in love. *Isaiah 54:9-10*

Tashlikh Personal Reflections

Tashlich Tidbits

By Rabbi Richard Israel

Some suggested tips for properly executing Tashlich (casting of sins into the waters. . .)

For ordinary sins, use – White bread
For exotic sins – French or Italian bread
For dark sins – Pumpernickel
For complex sins – Multigrain bread
For truly warped sins – Pretzels
For sins of indecision – Waffles
For sins committed in haste – Matzah
For substance abuse – Poppy seed rolls
For committing arson – Toast
For being ill-tempered – Sourdough bread
For silliness – Nut bread
For not giving full value – Shortbread
For political chauvinism – Yankee Doodles
For excessive use of irony – Rye bread
For continual bad jokes – Corn bread
For hardening our hearts – Jelly doughnuts
For excessive curiosity – Wonder Bread
For speed-limit violations – Russian bread
For usury – dough

Guided Meditation for Tashlich

By Erika Katske

We begin this meditation by standing in mountain pose. So, make sure that:

your feet are about shoulder-width apart

your feet are pressing evenly into the floor

your knees are relaxed

your shoulders are loose and that your arms are dangling by your sides

your facial muscles are softened

your spine makes a straight line from your stomach to your neck, pulling up to a point above your head.

your arms are stretched straight by your sides.

Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth to secure this position. With each breath afterwards, see if you can notice tiny adjustments you can make to deepen the posture.

In these next breaths, begin to imagine roots growing from all different parts of your feet, reaching deep into the ground. Imagine that these roots are pulling your feet down flat into the soil, supporting you-see if you can feel them from your toes, your heels, your arches and the ball of your feet. Relax your arms, straighten your spine and breathe.