



WOODSTOCK JEWISH CONGREGATION

Tashlich, 5782

A Personal *Tashlich*

Tashlich means “casting off.” It is a ritual that encourages us to think about the ways we have “missed the mark” in the past year and feel that we are disposing of our shortcomings into a body of flowing water so we can start the new year with a clean slate.

It is customary to perform *tashlich* on the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah but you can do it any day between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Where can I do *tashlich*?

Try to find a body of water like a river, stream, lake, pond, or well. You can use running water from a hose or faucet outside your home, and even if you can see the water only from a distance.

How do I prepare?

Think about the ways you’ve “missed the mark” in the last year, fallen short of the way you want to treat yourself, treat others, treat the Earth. Walk slowly and meditatively toward the water as you prepare to “cast your sins” and begin to think of how you can do better in the coming year. Remember that all of us make mistakes in life; be honest with yourself and know that you are not alone.

Where does the idea for *tashlich* come from?

The source verses for *tashlich* come from the very end of the book of the prophet Micah (7:19):

“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.”

What can I put in my pockets to represent the sins I am casting away?

In the past, people have turned out their pockets to let the lint and crumbs that accumulate there fly away. Some of us remember throwing small pieces of bread, hoping the bread will feed fish and birds. It turns out that “throwing breadcrumbs into bodies of natural water may disturb the ecosystem's nutrient balance, so consider substituting more nature-friendly elements like small stones or pebbles, leaves, pine needles, untreated wood chips, seashells or twigs instead.” (*Jewish Boston, August 28, 2018*)

What songs can I sing?

Sometimes a song can help get you into the right state of mind: (click on the song title to hear it on youtube)

- ***Eili, Eili:*** *Eili, Eili shelo yigamer l'olam. Hachol v'hayam, rishrush shel hamayim, b'rak hashamayim, t'filat ha-adam.*

O G!d, my G!d, I pray that these things never end: the sand and the sea, the rush of the waters, the crash of the heavens, the prayer of the heart

- ***Hashiveinu:*** *Hashiveinu, hashiveinu adonai eilecha v'nashuvah, v'nashuvah. Chadeish, chadeish yameinu k'kedem.*

Turn us back to You o G!d, and we will return. Renew our days as before.

- ***Avinu Malkeinu:*** *Avinu malkeinu, choneinu va-aneinu ki ein banu ma-asim. Asei imanu tzedakah vachessed v'hoshi-einu.*

Our father, our sovereign, be gracious to us and answer us, for we have no accomplishments. Deal with us justly and lovingly, and save us.

When you get to the water, offer a prayer

You can talk to G!d either out loud or silently about how you feel when you acknowledge your mistakes and how you plan to do better in the new year.

You can consider these questions:

Do I use my time wisely?

Am I there for people who need me?

Did I always do that kind deed, or did I put it off?

Was I able to stop myself from speaking unkindly?

What can I change so I can live life more fully?

Cast your sins into the water!

Do this when you feel ready. (If you are with others, not everyone will be ready at the same time.)

Let them go! Breathe out, and watch them sink or float away.

Feel lighter as you return home.

