

## Tashlikh at Home – תשליך בבית

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### The Ritual of Tashlikh

In Hebrew, tashlikh (תשליך) means “you will cast off,” as in “casting off sins”, a phrase we hear a lot in High Holidays liturgy. Because sins aren’t tangible, for the tashlikh ritual we use small pieces of bread to represent our sins. We cast that sin-laden bread into flowing water to be carried away with the current. There are different interpretations of using bread: bread can represent the flour-offerings in the Jerusalem Temple, but it can also stand for the everyday life - exactly what we want to change.

With each item we cast into the water, we remember and name, aloud or to ourselves, an aspect of our behavior we want to “cast away.” The text traditionally associated with this ritual is Micah 7:18-20:

מִי אֵל כְּמוֹךָ, נִשְׂא עוֹן וְעִבֵר עַל פְּשָׁע, לְשִׂאֲרֵית, נִחַלְתּוּ: לֹא הִחַזִּיק לְעַד אָפוּ, כִּי חָפֵץ חֶסֶד  
הוּא. יִשׁוּב יִרְחַמֵנוּ, יִכְבֹּשׂ עוֹנֵינּוּ; וְתִשְׁלִיךְ בְּמַצְלוֹת יָם, כָּל חַטָּאוֹתֵם. תִּתֵּן אֱמֶת לִיעֶקֶב,  
חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם, אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתֵּינוּ, מִיְמֵי קֶדֶם.

“Who is a God like You, forgiving iniquity and pardoning the transgression of the remnant of Your people? You do not maintain anger forever, but You delight in loving-kindness. You will again have compassion upon us, subduing our sins, casting all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and enduring love to Abraham, as You promised our ancestors from days of old.”

In many of the parks and waterways around the Lehigh Valley we understand that using bread can be problematic for the environment. Bread thrown in waterways feeds fish and ducks and other waterfowl. These processed grains are no longer ones that the animals can handle. There are fines in many of these local areas that preclude using bread.

As a community we often use other naturally present items which could have washed into the waterway on their own. Seeds, nuts, twigs and leaves from local trees and weeds are good alternatives for the bread pieces we would have brought from home. This focus on environmental stewardship is a fundamental tenet of Judaism. It also has been a big part of our Am Haskalah community’s commitment to improving our world. As you participate in these tashlikh rituals, we hope you contemplate the ways you can enter the new year with a renewed commitment to our responsibility to that world.

## Sources for Tashlikh

The ritual of tashlikh is not explicitly mentioned in the Torah or the Talmud and there's no formal liturgy. There are endless opportunities to create a ceremony that resonates with your Judaism. On this source sheet, you can find a few inspirational sources for tashlikh in the comfort and safety of your home.

### Psalm 130 - תהילים ק"ל - Psalm 130

A song of ascents. Out of the depths I call You, O LORD.  
O Lord, listen to my cry; let Your ears be attentive to my plea for mercy.  
If You keep account of sins, O LORD, Lord, who will survive?  
Yours is the power to forgive so that You may be held in awe.  
I look to the LORD; I look to Him; I await His word.  
I am more eager for the Lord than watchmen for the morning, watchmen for the morning.  
O Israel, wait for the LORD; for with the LORD is steadfast love and great power to redeem.  
It is He who will redeem Israel from all their iniquities.

דְּנִי שְׁמַעַה בְּקוֹלִי תְהַיְיְנָה אָזְנוֹךָ.  
קִשְׁבוֹת לְקוֹלִי וְלֹא תִחַנְנוּנִי:  
אִם-עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמְרֶינָה אֲדֹנָי מִי-  
יֵעָמֵד:  
כִּי-עַמְךָ הִסְלִיחָה לְמַעַן תִּזְרָא:  
קִנִּיתִי יְהוָה קִוְיָתָה נַפְשִׁי וְלִדְבַר-  
הוֹחֵלְתִי:  
נַפְשִׁי לְאֲדֹנָי מִשְׁמָרִים לַבֹּקֶר  
שְׁמָרִים לַבֹּקֶר:  
יְחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא-יְהוָה כִּי-עַם-יְהוָה  
הַחֹסֵד וְהַרְבֵּה עִמּוֹ פְדוּתִי:  
וְהוּא יַפְדֶּה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל  
עֲוֹנוֹתָיו:

### A Prayer for Tashlikh

By Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

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.

And we say together:  
Amen.

Source: <https://www.ritualwell.org/ritual/prayer-tashlikh>

## Sowing Bread in the Sea: A Psalm for Tashlich

By Ted Merwin

Oh God, who is like You?  
We come to you heavy laden  
Groaning with the weight of our sins  
And the sins of our community and elected  
officials  
Will You take us back in love?  
Will we turn our hearts and deeds to You?

As You have brought forth bread from the  
Earth,  
So we cast it into the sea  
Renewing the cycle of life  
Closing a circle which ripples into infinite  
circles  
Like the many nested communities which  
make up our city,  
Communities which strive to live together in  
peace  
Ever-renewed themselves by the coming of  
immigrants  
Ever struggling to feed and house and  
clothe themselves  
Ever waiting for bread

God, we shed our sins and the sins of our  
city  
As an animal slips from its skin which has  
withered and decayed  
As a plant drops leaves and leaves fruit  
As a molecule trades its membrane for a  
new coat of cells

If you keep account of sins, O Creator,  
Who will survive?  
As the trees turn over their leaves,  
And the canopy of green turns to crimson  
and gold,  
Then shudders and shatters and subsides  
Let us repaint the colors of our lives  
In a city too often painted starkly Black and  
White

In which the contrasts between rich and  
poor are  
Etched so deeply that Your  
Wrath is ever kindled anew

By Your word the heavens were made,  
By the breath of Your mouth, all their host  
Have been true to the spirit of Your creation  
You heap up the ocean waters like a  
mound,  
And hoard the deep in vaults, but  
Most of it we cannot see  
Most of the time we are blind to the  
wonders of Your world  
Just as we are blind far too often to the  
oppressions with which  
We have tarnished Your creation  
For poverty and inequality and violence are  
our own inventions  
With which we bludgeon, intimidate and  
abandon each other

As the season turns, as we choose elected  
officials, begin a school year  
Let us be reminded that everything in life  
Renews itself  
All evil, all that is deadening and rot can be  
cast away  
We know tomorrow we may eat  
Of the fish who consume this bread  
We put our trust in You, Creator of All  
That You will ever keep watch upon us,  
Saving us from death  
Preserving us from fear  
Sustaining us in the spiritual and moral  
famine  
Which threatens to engulf and overwhelm  
us all

We cast this bread as a token of our faith in  
You

As a pledge to ourselves to take care of  
each other better,  
To attend to the needs of all in our  
communities, to the good of the city as a  
whole  
To attune ourselves to the spirit of Your  
creation

We let loose and let free  
The little pieces of ourselves

That have dishonored us  
The little pieces of ourselves  
That have betrayed our neighbors and  
blighted our common good  
The little pieces of ourselves  
That have helped erect and not dismantle  
injustice in our name  
In order to more perfectly love  
You, ourselves and each other

Source: <https://rac.org/rosh-hashanah-sowing-bread-sea-psalm-tashlich>

## Tashlikh Worksheet

By Lynn Chapman

Below is a special worksheet for tashlikh. On this worksheet you can record things you want to cast off, keep, or bring into the New Year in many aspects of life. It's a more holistic approach to this ritual.

	Cast Off	Keep	Make Room For/ Reclaim
Thoughts			
Beliefs			
Relationships			
Work/Career			
Body/Health			
Hobbies			
Service (volunteering)			
Spirituality			

Source: <https://www.ritualwell.org/ritual/tashlikh-ritual>