



Machar: The Washington Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism
Tashlikh Service - 2019/5780 - תַּשְׁלִיךְ

What is Tashlikh?

What is *tashlikh* (often spelled *tashlich*)? The word means “you will cast away,” and is likely taken from Micah 7:19, “You will cast (*tashlikh*) all your sins into the depths of the sea.”

The first record of Jews performing *tashlikh* is from the late Middle Ages — traditional, but not especially old relative to the rest of Jewish history. In most communities, it involved casting bread, rocks, or sticks into a body of water, and includes shaking out one’s pockets as a symbol of intending to fully cast away one’s misdeeds. However, some people cast *themselves* — Jews in Kurdistan would recite their *tashlikh* prayers and then jump into the water and swim around.

Modern interpretations of *tashlikh* involve symbolically casting away not only negative actions, but also negative character traits or habits.

Tashlikh Reflection

**We arrive bearing the last year’s load of leaven.
Triumphs and failures,
Missed chances,
Joys and sorrows.**

*At tashlikh, we cast away the staler bits;
Throw aside our regrets,
Like so many breadcrumbs
Carried off in water.*

**If we cast away our ills, what do we lose?
Can we learn from mistakes?**

**Might good turn bad?
Might bad be made good?**

This *tashlikh* let's not cast our selves away.
We'll keep the crumbs of our pasts,
Hold tight these few morsels -
The bread of our lives.

(Rabbi Jeremy Kridel)

A Tashlikh Kavvanah

The Hebrew word *kavvanah* means “intention.” *Kavvanot* have long been used to help focus one’s attention onto a specific interpretation or meaning of a text used in a ceremony or service. *Nashlikh* — let us cast off — last year’s negative thoughts, attitudes, and attributes. And as we do so, let us recite together this *kavvanah* — this intention — for us to use as a focus for our actions:

As I cast this bread upon the waters,
may my troubles be lifted off my shoulders.

May I know that last year is over,
washed away like crumbs in the current.

May my heart be opened to joy and gratitude,
My energies renewed as the dew renews the grasses

(Rabbi Rachel Barenblat, adapted)

*(Now we'll do the core of the tashlikh ceremony by
casting bits of bread to be carried away in the water..)*

Humanistic Al Cheit

Having symbolically cast away the pains and regrets of the prior year as individuals, let us now acknowledge our errors to one another with a secular humanistic version of the traditional *Al Cheit*, the High Holidays confessional:

Let this be our confession.
For the sin I committed against *you*.

For the sins we've committed against one another.

For indifference.
And for interference.

**For minor slights.
And for outrageous affronts.**

For forgetting.
And for reminding.

**For ignoring.
And for pointing out.**

Forgive me; pardon me — as I pardon you.

(Jeremy Kridel)

Wishing Each Other Peace

As we conclude our *tashlikh* service, let us wish one another peace—and may we work together for peace in the coming year.

נַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּעוֹלָם. נַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם.
וְאָמְרוּ שְׁלוֹם.

*Na'a-seh sha-lom ba-ol-am. Na'aseh sha-lom a-lei-nu v'al kol ha-ol-am.
V'im-ru sha-lom.*

Let us work to create peace here on earth, for us and for all peoples. And let us say, “Shalom.”