



MENTAL HEALTH TASHLICH

What is Tashlich (Tashlikh)?

Tashlich, or “you will cast,” is a tradition that usually takes place on Rosh Hashanah afternoon. During Tashlich, individuals go to a body of water and recite the last verses (7:18-19) from the prophet Micah:

“You will again have compassion upon us, subduing our sins, casting all our sins into the depths of the sea.” (Micah 7:19) (Translation from Rabbi Ruth Ross and Cantor Roland Roth of Congregation Beth Shalom, September 2008)

Tashlich is a representation of expressing repentance, acceptance and forgiveness. We acknowledge any harm we have done, accept that we have harmed others and forgive ourselves with a commitment to move forward and do better.

Rabbis have encouraged using a body of water containing fish for Tashlich, reminding us just as a fish cannot escape being caught suddenly in a net (Ecclesiastes 9:12), people can never escape God’s judgment. But as Tashlich is a symbolic ceremony, some of its elements are flexible. Any body of water will do — even a hose or a faucet. Sometimes people toss crumbs into the water to represent casting away their sins into the sea.

While Tashlich most often happens on the afternoon of Rosh Hashanah, it can occur on any day except Shabbat from Rosh Hashanah through the end of Sukkot.

Mental Health and Tashlich

Our mental and physical health are intertwined, affecting one another and our overall health. During Tashlich, we are consciously connecting our mind and body. Not only are we thinking about our mistakes from the previous year; we are engaging in the act of repentance by physically casting them away and making a commitment toward the next year.



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Drawing upon the [middah](#), or Jewish value, of [yesod](#) (תִּיּוֹד), or groundedness, we can incorporate mental well-being into Jewish traditions. Yesod is about balance.

"Every person should have two pockets so they can reach into one or the other, according to their needs. In one pocket, carry a note that says 'Bishvili Nivra Ha'Olam: For my sake, the world was created.' In the other pocket, a note that says, 'Anochi afar va'efer: I am dust and ashes.' " (Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Przysucha, 19th century CE).

At its core, this means we need to learn to hold two ideas at the same time:

- 1) I am worthy and have value simply by being me.
- 2) I have flaws and have made mistakes, so I need to grow.

These two seemingly opposite, but actually synchronous ideas, mirror the themes of repentance, acceptance and forgiveness that create the Tashlich tradition.

Tashlich Activity

This year, consider practicing this mental health walking meditation that incorporates both [yesod](#) and [kavanah](#), the Jewish value dedicated to the act of creating an intention or engaging with the sincere feelings and direction of the heart.



*Translation from: Rabbi Ruth Ross and Cantor Roland Roth of Congregation Beth Shalom, September 2008

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Traditional Tashlich Prayer

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 lovingkindness. 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 fathers from days of old. (Micah 7:18-19)*

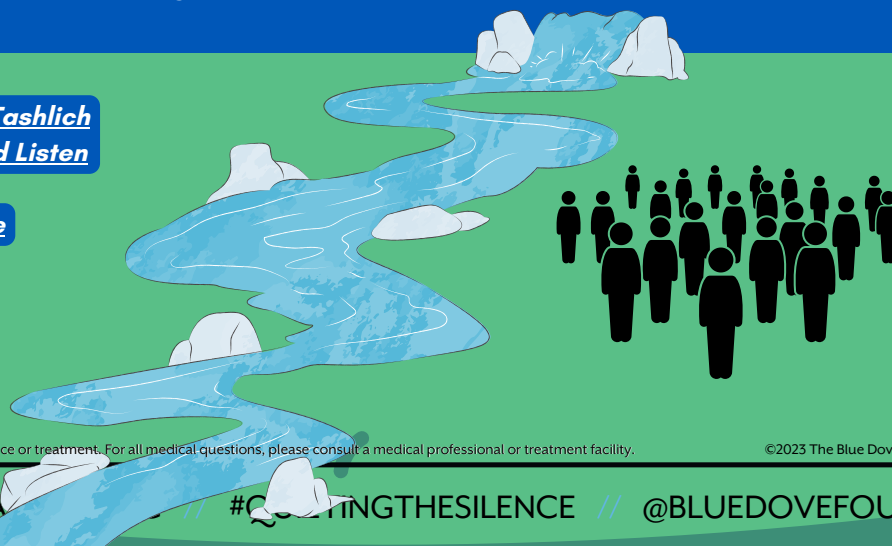
In distress I called on the LORD; the Lord answered me and brought me relief. The LORD is on my side, I have no fear; what can man do to me? With the LORD on my side as my helper, I will see the downfall of my foes. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in mortals; it is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in the great.

מִי־אֵל כְּמוֹךָ נִשְׂא עוֹן וְעֵבֶר
עַל־פֶּשַׁע לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נִחְלָתוֹ
לֹא־יִחַזֵּק לְעַד אָפוּ כִּי־חַפֵּץ
חֶסֶד הוּא: יָשׁוּב יִרְחַמֵּנוּ
יִכְבֹּשׁ עֲוֹנֹתֵינוּ וְתִשְׁלִיךְ
בְּמַצְלוֹת יָם כָּל־חַטָּאוֹתֵם:
תֵּתֵן אֱמֶת לִיעֲקֹב חֶסֶד
לְאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ
לְאַבְתֵּינוּ מִיָּמֵי קֶדֶם.

מִן־הַמָּצָר קָרָאתִי יְהוָה עֲנֵנִי
בְּמִרְחֹב יְהוָה: יְהוָה לִי לֹא
אִירָא מִה־יַּעֲשֶׂה לִי אָדָם:
יְהוָה לִי בַּעֲזָרִי וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה
בְּשִׁנְאִי: טוֹב לְחַסּוֹת בִּיהוָה
מִבֶּטֶחַ בָּאָדָם: טוֹב לְחַסּוֹת
בִּיהוָה מִבֶּטֶחַ בְּנִדְיָבִים.



[Download Our Tashlich
Prayer Card and Listen
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Meditation Here](#)





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DO

Think about your actions this past year. What are you most proud of, and what would you do differently?

SAY

“Who is a God like You, forgiving iniquity and pardoning the transgression of the remnant of Your people?”

DO

Think about your strengths and how they have helped you act from a place of compassion to enact positive change in your life and the lives of others.

SAY

“You do not maintain anger forever, but You delight in lovingkindness.”

DO

Think about your intentions behind the actions you have taken that you are not proud of. If the intentions were good, think about how you might translate them into new actions. If you don't feel good about your intentions, think about how you'd like to respond differently in the year to come.

SAY

“You will again have compassion upon us, subduing our sins, casting all our sins into the depths of the sea.”

DO

Take a breath and envision letting go of your thoughts. Visualize them as crumbs, floating down a river. Now set a new intention for how you'd like to treat others, and yourself, this year.

SAY

“You will show faithfulness to Jacob and enduring love to Abraham, as You promised our fathers from days of old. ”