



MAROM מרומ

Tashlich - a Renewal Ceremony



Author

Marom team

Read time

10 - 30 min

Level

1

Amount of people

Everyone around
the table



Tashlich - a Renewal Ceremony

Let's get inspired

For generations, Jews have been gathering on the evening of the first day of Rosh Hashanah next to a body of water to recite the thirteen attributes of God's mercy. This ceremony, known as tashlich, invites us to bring mercy and tenderness to the imprecise actions of the past year. This gives us the opportunity to take responsibility and not make the same missteps during the coming year.

Instructions

You are invited to read about the source of the tashlich text and its significance. You will also find the text of the service as well as guidance on how to hold your own tashlich.

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The Jewish year opens with a great belief in humanity's ability to choose and to change. In Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur prayers, we place ourselves in front of the mirror of the soul, confessing all the transgressions we have committed, whether inadvertently or maliciously, whether by the arrogance of the heart, or by the utterance of the tongue. We meet for the tashlich ceremony before sunset on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, to dump our transgressions into the depths of the sea (or another nearby water source, preferably with fish in it). We identify water with mercy and throw our transgressions into it in order to purify ourselves and to prepare ourselves for the High Holidays.

At the tashlich ceremony, the community gathers near a water source and reads together the thirteen attributes of God's mercy that appear in the Book of Exodus:

ו"ה' ה' אל רחום וְחַנוּן אֲרַךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת: נֹצֵר חֶסֶד לְאַלְפִים נֹשֵׂא עוֹן וְפֹשֵׁעַ וְחַטָּאָה וְנִקְהָה."

Adonai, Adonai, El rakhum v'khanun, erekh apayim v'rav khesed ve'emet. Notzier khesed la'alafim, nosei avon vafesha v'khata'ah v'nakeh.

“The LORD! the LORD! a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and pardoning.”

At the tashlich ceremony we acknowledge our responsibility for our actions and the consequences thereof. Acknowledging our flaws, our transgressions, is not simple. We do this not out of guilt, but out of an understanding that in order to change, cleanse, and move forward we need to look at our actions with a degree of mercy.

We throw our transgressions into the river because we are aware of them, but also out of a belief that, like a body of water, they can cleanse us and change us. From this perspective, we can begin to forgive ourselves and provide ourselves with a new beginning.

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Who participates in tashlich?

Each and every person who wishes to participate is welcome, whether outdoors in public or at home.

How does a private, personal tashlich work?

In order to cast off our transgressions, we must do two extremely difficult things. The first is to figure out what the things are that we define as our own personal transgressions, and the second is to release those transgressions. Let us begin with the first part:

Our transgressions:

Find a quiet, isolated place. Take a few moments to find a comfortable place to sit and relax. When you feel comfortable, begin speaking to yourself (or to a partner). Start by saying, “I am... I am...” Speak about yourself more and more. Let the speech lead your thoughts-- speak without thinking about the content beforehand. When you say something that makes you feel uncomfortable, begin to focus on that. Expand your speech on what it is that makes you feel uncomfortable, the “transgression”. Speak about it as if you are explaining it to yourself. In the first stage, discuss the “transgression” as an onlooker, as if you are giving a full description of what the transgression is. After a few minutes, transition into speaking about the “transgression” from within, such as what the “transgression” makes you feel. After five minutes of elaborating within the two phases, the time has come to let it go.

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Releasing the transgression:

Now, the time has come to release the transgression. If you have the option, you can write the transgression on a piece of paper.

Alternatively, imagine the words that comprise the transgression. If you wrote it on a piece of paper, you can dissolve it in water. If you are using your imagination, let the transgression dissipate. Imagine the transgression present, or written above your head. The time has come to bid the transgression farewell, to escort the transgression away, until its imagined presence has disappeared.



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THANKS TO:



for their support.