

## Tashlich – Background

- In Hebrew, *tashlich* means “casting off.”
- The *Tashlich* ceremony developed around the 13th century, and is customarily performed on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, although you can do it anytime in the holiday season until the end of Sukkot.
- It includes reading the source passage for the ritual, the last verse from the prophet Micah (7:19)  
*God will again have compassion upon us; God will subdue our iniquities; and **you will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.***
- We cast breadcrumbs representing sins into a body of flowing water to be carried away with the current. 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 rabbis preferred that Tashlich be done at a body of water containing fish (“man cannot escape God’s judgment any more than fish can escape being caught in a net”) Fish don’t have eyelids and their eyes are always open, so they aren’t in danger of succumbing to the “evil eye.” Their open eyes also symbolize God’s constant protective watch over the Jewish people.
- This is a symbolic ceremony so any body of water will do, even water running out of a hose or a faucet.
- Because Tashlich is not explicitly mentioned in the Torah or the Talmud, there’s no formal liturgy.

## Tashlich – Do it Yourself

- Use the service available on the TBE website.
- Try a Social Justice theme: Use or adapt “Tashlich for a Just City” <https://rac.org/tashlich-just-city> (Find a related psalm [here](#).) Or come up with your own social justice-themed service based on the issues and topics that matter most to you.
- If you live near a natural body of water, consider doing a Tashlich ceremony at that location.
- If you can’t make it to a flowing body of water or don’t have one nearby, think outside the box: Make up a Tashlich service at a nearby local pool or even with a sprinkler or hose in your own backyard.
- Think of the ecosystem. Whatever you cast away should dissolve easily, as you hope your sins will, so if throwing breadcrumbs into a natural water source seems not ecologically sound, consider substituting more nature-friendly elements like leaves, pine needles, birdseed or fish food. Maybe you can put your sin in a bubble and watch it float away and disappear!
- Consider different crumbs for different sins. This fun and silly list has been floating around the Internet since the 1990s. (i.e. For ordinary sins use white bread. For particularly dark sins, use pumpernickel. For sins of indecision, use waffles). <http://www.bricklin.com/crumblist.htm>

“Ritual, at its core, enables us to connect on a physical level with a spiritual idea, to guide our thoughts from the motion of the ritual itself to the teaching it embodies. To go beyond the annual exercise of thinking about the bad things we’ve done, we need to have the strength, the will, the determination, and the oneness of mind to swim into the darkness and sink our sins lower and lower until we know for certain they are lost forever. And then.....we will hopefully break above the surface, stronger, purer, wiser than before.”

<https://reformjudaism.org/tashlich-deep>

### References:

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/tashlikh/>

<https://www.ritualwell.org/categories/496>

<https://www.jewishboston.com/do-it-yourself-tashlich/>