

Tashlich is the Rosh HaShanah afternoon custom of symbolically casting one’s sins into water. Apparently, the custom originated in Europe during the Middle Ages, and is based on a phrase in the biblical book of Micah (7:19): “You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” Penitential prayers are accompanied by the act of emptying one’s pockets or casting bread crumbs into flowing waters—symbolic of casting off regret and sin, and beginning anew.

To everything there is a season,
and there is an appointed time for
every purpose under heaven.

לְכֹל זְמַן, וְעֵת לְכָל-חֶפֶץ
תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם:

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Now is the time for turning.

The leaves are beginning to turn from green to red and orange.

The birds are beginning to turn and are heading once more toward the south.

The animals are beginning to turn to storing their food for the winter.

For leaves, birds and animals turning comes instinctively. But for us turning does not come so easily.

It takes an act of will for us to make a turn.

It means breaking with old habits. It means admitting that we have been wrong; and this is never easy.

It means losing face; it means starting all over again; and this is always painful.

It means saying: “I am sorry.” It means admitting that we have the ability to change; and this is always embarrassing.

One generation goes, another comes. . . . All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full.
(Ecclesiastes 1:4,7)

תְּשַׁלֵּיךְ (“*Tashlich*,” “you shall cast”) Free will is given to every human being. If we wish to incline ourselves toward goodness and righteousness, we are free to do so; and if we wish to incline ourselves toward evil, we are also free to do that. From Scripture (Genesis 3:22) we learn that the human species, with its

knowledge of good and evil, is unique among all earth’s creatures. Of our own accord, by our own faculty of intelligence and understanding, we can distinguish between good and evil, doing as we choose. Nothing holds us back from making this choice between good and evil—the power is in our hands. (Rambam)

These things are terribly hard to do. But unless we turn, we will be trapped forever in yesterday's ways.

Adonai, help us to turn—

From callousness to sensitivity, from hostility to love,

From pettiness to purpose, from envy to contentment,

From carelessness to discipline, from fear to faith.

Turn us around, Adonai, and bring us back toward You. Revive our lives, as at the beginning.

And turn us toward each other, O God, for in isolation there is no life.

Silent Personal Confession

וידוי

In deep humility, I make supplication unto You, my God. Conscious of my frailties and my shortcomings, I seek You with the hope that I shall find You.

As I ponder fully the year now behind me, I recognize how I have failed to make it count in Your service and the service of all other people. I have often been selfish when I should have been self-sacrificing, harsh when I should have been gentle, hard when I should have been kind, thoughtless when I should have been considerate.

All too often I turned a deaf ear to the prompting of my better self and permitted my evil inclination to swerve me from the path of right. I know how often I have compromised my convictions and settled for less than the right. I confess this before You in this hour of self-searching and self-examination. I know how frail I am.

Deep as I may have fallen, I have Your assurance that I can rise to the heights if I so will. You have placed before me good and evil and have given me the power to choose between them. As mine is this power, so is mine also the responsibility.

Adonai, my God, open my eyes that I may see clearly where I have gone astray. And give me the strength in the coming days to recognize every year, every hour, that I am shaping my destiny and the destiny of Your world.

Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and forgives the transgression of the remnant of God's possession? God does not stay angry forever but delights in lovingkindness. God will turn to us in compassion, suppress our iniquities, and cast into the depths of the sea all sins. Grant truth to Jacob, loyalty to Abraham, as You promised our ancestors in days long ago.

מִי־אֵל כְּמוֹךָ נִשְׂא עוֹן וְעֵבֶר
עַל־פְּשַׁע לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נִחְלָתוֹ,
לֹא־הֶחֱזִיק לְעַד אָפוֹ,
כִּי־חָפֵץ חַסֵּד הוּא: יְשׁוּב
יִרְחַמְנוּ, יִכְבֹּשׁ עֲוֹנֹתֵינוּ,
וְתִשְׁלִיךְ בַּמַּצְלוֹת יָם כָּל־
חַטָּאתָם: תִּתֵּן אֱמֶת לְיַעֲקֹב,
חַסֵּד לְאַבְרָהָם, אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ
לְאַבְתֵּינוּ מִיְמֵי קֶדֶם:

Micah 7:18-20

“Cast your sins” into the water.

A Song of Ascents.

From the depths I have called to You, Adonai.
Adonai, hear my voice;
let Your ears be attentive to the sound of my pleas.

If You, Adonai, should keep account of sins, who could stand?

But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be revered.

I wait for the Eternal God, my soul awaits; and in God's word I place my hope.

My soul waits for the Eternal God more than watchmen wait for the morning, watching for morning.

Israel, place your hope in Adonai, for with God there is steadfast love and power to redeem.

It is God who will redeem the People Israel from all its transgressions.

Turn us toward You, Adonai, and we shall return; renew our days as at the beginning.

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת.

מִמַּעַמְקִים קָרָאתִיךָ יְהוָה:
אֲדַנִּי שְׁמַעָה בְּקוֹלִי,
תְּהַיְיָנָה אֲזִינָה קְשׁוּבוֹת
לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָי:

אִם־עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמְרֵינָה,
אֲדַנִּי, מִי יַעֲמֵד:

כִּי־עֲמֻךָ הַסְּלִיחָה, לְמַעַן תִּגְוֹרָא:

קִוִּיתִי יְהוָה, קוֹתָה נַפְשִׁי,
וּלְדַבְּרוֹ הוֹחֲלֵתִי:

נַפְשִׁי לַיהוָה, מִשְׁמָרִים
לְבַקָּה שְׁמָרִים לְבַקָּר:

יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל יְהוָה,
כִּי־עַם־יְהוָה הַחֲסֵה
וְהִרְבָּה עַמּוֹ פְּדוּת:

וְהוּא יַפְדֶּה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל
עֲוֹנוֹתָיו:

הִשְׁיִבְנוּ, יְהוָה, אֵלֶיךָ וְנִשְׁוֹבָה.
חֲדָשׁ יְמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם:

Psalms 130

Remember us unto life, O Sovereign who delights in life, and inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, O God of Life. (High Holyday Machzor)

Lamentations 5:21

Sukkot is known by many names, including “HeChag,” “The Festival.” The culmination of the fall harvest has always been cause for great joy and thanksgiving. The mitzvot associated with the week-long festival are dwelling in sukkot, waving the lulav and etrog, hosting guests, and sharing our bounty with the hungry and homeless. These come to teach that the ultimate Source of the joys we reap is God who created every living thing; the permanent Shelter we take from the storms of life is God who is everywhere.

For Waving the Lulav

Here I am now ready and prepared to fulfill the command of my Creator, who has commanded us in the Torah: “On the first day you shall take for yourselves the fruit of the *hadar* tree, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook.”

Praised are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has sanctified us with mitzvot, and has commanded us concerning taking up the lulav.

הריני מוכן ומזמן (“I am now ready and prepared”) This meditation to focus our intention before “lifting up” the lulav first appears in Rabbi Nathan Hannover’s prayerbook, *Sha’arei Tziyon*, published in Prague in 1662.

נטילת לולב How to “raise” the lulav and etrog:

1. The lulav consists of one palm branch (*lulav*), two willow branches (*aravah*), and three myrtle branches (*hadass*). It is held in the right hand, so that the spine is turned toward you. The willow branches are to the left of the spine, the myrtle to the right.
2. The etrog has a stem (*oketz*) on one end and a dried flower (*pitam*) on the other.

על נטילת לולב

הריני מוכן ומזמן לקיים
מצוות בוראי, שצונו בתורתו:
ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון
פרי עץ הדר כפת תמרים
וענף עץ עבת וערבי נחל.

Leviticus
23:40

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו,
מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו
במצותיו, וצונו על
נטילת לולב.

It is held in the left hand with the *pitam* pointed down while the blessing *Al Netilat Lulav* is recited (and also *Shehecheyanu* when this is done for the first time on Sukkot).

3. After reciting the blessing, turn the etrog so that the *pitam* points up for the waving, the actual mitzvah.

Hold both hands tightly together and shake three times in six directions—east, south, west, north, upward, downward.

When to shake the lulav and etrog:

1. Immediately after reciting the blessing.
2. During the Hallel at the words *hodu* and *ana*.
3. Never while God’s name is pronounced.