

Congregation Ahavath Chesed Tashlich Service

From Psalm 27

Just one thing I have asked of God; only this do I seek: to dwell in God's House all the days of my life, to behold divine sweetness and beauty, and to gaze in delight at God's Temple.

Achat sha'alti mei-eit Adonai,
otah avakeish,
shiv-ti b'veit Adonai kol y'mei cha-yai,
la-chazot b'no-am Adonai ul'vakeir
b'heichalo.

אֶחַת שְׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת יי,
אוֹתָהּ אֲבַקֵּשׁ,
שִׁבְתִּי בְּבַיִת יי כָּל יְמֵי חַיֵּי,
לְחַזוֹת בְּנֹעַם יי וּלְבַקֵּר בְּהֵיכָלוֹ.



Tashlich: Casting our Sins Away

Tashlich is a remarkable ceremony - symbolic and concrete all at the same time. Through this ritual, we express not only our desire to be free from sin but our continuing hope that we will be forgiven for past misdeeds. Following Rosh HaShanah, but before Yom Kippur, it is customary to go to a flowing body of water and to recite prayers while “casting” our sins (usually represented by bread crumbs) into the water. As we read in Micah: “You will cast (*tashlich*) all your sins into the depths of the sea” (7:19). Today we come to this body of water to perform the *Tashlich* ceremony, seeking symbolically to “cast away” our accumulated sins and transgressions so that we may purify our hearts and our souls as the new year begins.

At this holy time of year, we are also taught to apologize and make amends with people we may have hurt but, when we make the list of our misdeeds, we often forget to make amends to ourselves. All of the self-deprecation, whether it be comparing ourselves or our achievements to others or telling ourselves we are not enough, is as hurtful as saying these things to another. As we move through this service, we challenge you to not only *apologize* to yourself for negative thoughts about yourself, but to *forgive* yourself for them as well.

First, let us ask ourselves hard questions, for this is the time for truth.

How much time did we waste in the year that is now gone?

*Was there real companionship within our family?
Or was there a living together and a growing apart?*

How was it with our friends: were we there when they needed us or not?

The kind deed: did we perform it or postpone it?

The unnecessary word: did we say it, or did we hold it back?

*Did we live by false values?
Did we deceive another? Did we deceive ourselves?*

Did we acquire only possessions? Or did we acquire new insights as well?

Did we mind only our own business? Or did we feel the heartbreak of others?

Did we live fully? And if not, then have we learned, and will we change?



Let us cast away the sin of deception, so that we will mislead no one in word or deed, nor pretend what we are not.

Let us cast away the sin of vain ambition, which prompts us to strive for goals which bring neither true fulfillment nor genuine contentment.

Let us cast away the sin of stubbornness, so that we will neither persist in foolish habits nor fail to acknowledge our will to change.

Let us cast away the sin of envy, so that we will neither be consumed by desire for what we lack nor grow unmindful of the blessings which are already ours.

Let us cast away the sin of selfishness, which keeps us from enriching our lives through wider concerns and great sharing and from reaching out in love to other human beings.

Let us cast away the sin of indifference, so that we may be sensitive to the sufferings of others and responsive to the needs of people everywhere.

Let us cast away the sin of pride and arrogance, so that we can worship God and serve God's purpose in humility and truth.

Micah 7:18-20

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 loving-kindness. 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.

Avinu Malkeinu

Avinu Malkeinu, shema koleinu.

Eternal, our God, hear our prayer.

Avinu Malkeinu, we have sinned before You.

Eternal, our God, have mercy upon us and upon our children.

Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us for blessing in the Book of Life.

Eternal, our God, grant unto us a year of happiness.

Avinu Malkeinu, be gracious and answer us, for we have not done enough good deeds. Please love us, be generous with us, and help us.

Avinu Malkeinu, choneninu va-aneinu,

ki ein banu ma'asim

Aseh imanu, tzedakah va-chesed

v'hoshienu.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, חֲנֹנֵנוּ וְעֲנֵנוּ,
כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים,
עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

Richard Israel's Crumb List (©1997)

Taking a few crumbs to Tashlich from whatever old bread is in the house lacks subtlety, nuance and religious sensitivity. I would suggest that we can do better. Instead:

For ordinary sins, use - White Bread
For exotic sins - French Bread
For particularly dark sins - Pumpernickel
For complex sins - Multi-grain
For twisted sins - Pretzels
For sins of chutzpah - Fresh Bread
For substance abuse - Stoned Wheat
For arson - Toast
For being sulky - Sourdough
For silliness - Nut Bread
For not giving full value - Short Bread
For telling bad jokes - Corn Bread
For being money-hungry -
 Enriched Bread
For telling small lies - Fudge
For war-mongering - Kaiser Rolls
For promiscuity - Hot Buns
For racism - Crackers
For being holier-than-thou - Bagels
For unfairly up-braiding others - Challah
For snobbery - Upper Crusts
For trashing the environment -
 Dumplings

For the sin of laziness -
 Any Very Long Loaf
For being hyper-critical - Pan Cakes
For gambling - Fortune Cookies
For pride - Puff Pastry
For dropping in without calling -
 Popovers
For trying to improve people -
 Angel Food Cake
For being up-tight - Bran Muffins
For sycophancy - Brownies
For rearing kids incompetently -
 Raisin Bread
For recurring slip ups - Banana Bread
For davening off tune - Flat Bread
For impetuosity - Quick Bread
For risking one's life unnecessarily -
 Hero Bread
For auto theft - Caraway
For excessive use of irony - Rye Bread
For putting yourself down -
 Bottom of Your Favorite Bread

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