

Humanistic Tashlikh

The word tashlikh means “a casting off.” Historically, on the afternoon of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish community gathered beside a moving body of water and threw in bread crumbs, metaphorically casting away their sins to the fish who, in turn, carried them away. In our modern interpretation of Jewish practice, we do not accept that our transgressions are reckoned by a divine judge. However, there are things that we would like to cast off, things of which we would like to rid ourselves. We can certainly let go of negative behaviors, regrets, painful experiences, and harmful thoughts. We do not always have access to fish or moving bodies of water, but we can still participate in this ancient custom in our time, in our way.

– Rabbi Miriam Jerris

Forgiving Ourselves A Tashlikh Meditation

How many of us go through life constantly accusing ourselves for choices that did not pan out well for us? We may have made mistakes in judgment, or we may not have seen a situation clearly enough at one time, and now our judgment may be more mature. We give ourselves over to regret and remorse, and maybe even self-contempt. We relive past mistakes over and over, shutting out the present and its possibilities from our consciousness. We feel that we just cannot forgive ourselves.

But not only can we, but we must, forgive ourselves if we want to live a normal, happy, and healthy life.

Judaism tells us that it is just as wrong to exaggerate our wrong-doings, letting them destroy us, as it is to be altogether indifferent to them.

We all possess the qualities of goodness, love, selflessness, wisdom, creativeness, and power for achievement. And under healthy circumstances, we see that each one of us embraces a striving, a working toward, a climbing upward, and a reaching outward to the expression of those qualities. But striving has both a forward and backward movement — a reaching out and a falling back, a slipping and a retrogressing. What is important, however, is that our ultimate progress be upward, and that the sum total of our lives brings us eventually to a higher level than from where we began....

This is the time of the year where we make a concerted effort to look into our own hearts and see the true goodness that is there in each of us. Let's learn to forgive ourselves, and through that forgiveness we can be free from guilt, and better able to do the greater good and be the better human beings that our souls envision.

– Rabbi Frank Tamburello



Society for
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Rosh Hashanah Renewal

The universe knows no calendar. The earth has no clock.
Humanity does.

There are times when we pause our constant motion,
look at the world we have built for ourselves, and wonder:
What does it all mean? Is it all worth it? And can I go on?
It is those times that our deepest need is renewal.

If people learned anew in every generation,
we would never progress.

Language, culture, and civilization exist because past
generations provided experience and wisdom.
Our inheritance lifts us beyond nature, beyond the cycle.
Winter never learns from Autumn, and Summer knows
nothing of Spring. Yet we have learned from our
ancestors, as our children will learn from us.

We are renewed by what is timeless in human
experience: family, love, ideas, and community.
We renew each other with our love and support.

We renew ourselves with our commitment to core values.
We are the meaning of life. We go on.

This Rosh Hashanah,
we renew our commitments together.

We renew our commitments to Justice,
to Truth, and to Peace.

– Rabbi Adam Chalom



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