

Tashlikh: Casting our Sins Away

The Biblical Source of Tashlikh

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 lovingkindness. 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. –Micah 7:18-20

On Repentance

Do not say that repentance is not necessary except for serious transgressions such as illicit sexual relations, robbery and theft. Just as a person must repent of acts such as these, he is required to examine his bad traits and turn away from such negative characteristics as anger, hostility, jealousy, the tendency to ridicule, pursuit of material possessions and honor, and gluttony. A person must repent of each of these. These offenses are more difficult to deal with than the other ones because such traits affect our actions at all times, and it is difficult for a person to refrain from such habitual behavior. –Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance, 7.3

A Tashlikh Prayer

Let us cast away the sin of deception, so that we will mislead no one in word or deed, nor pretend to be 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 greater 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 our people everywhere.

Let us cast away the sins of pride and arrogance, so that we may worship God and serve His purposes in humility and in truth.

An Individual Prayer

Out of the depths I call to You;

Lord, hear my cry, heed my plea.

Be attentive to my prayers, to my sigh of supplication.

Who could endure, Lord, if You kept count of every sin?

But forgiveness is Yours: therefore we revere You.

I wait for the Lord; my soul yearns.

Hopefully I await His word.

I wait for the Lord more eagerly than watchmen wait for dawn.

Put your hope in the Lord, for the Lord is generous with mercy.

Abundant is His power to redeem;

May he redeem the people Israel from all sin.

--Psalm 130

Looking Back

During the past year, what has made you really happy?

What do you really regret not doing last year?

What opportunities did you miss?

Whom do you wish you had not hurt?

How might you make up for what you did?

What was a Jewish high for you this past year?

What was a Jewish low for you this past year?