A Personal *Tashlich* For Rosh Hashanah

1 **Look for a natural body of water that you can access easily.** *Tashlich* requires that you cast your sins into a body of water like a river, spring, lake, pond, or well. Most people prefer natural, flowing bodies of water because it gives the effect of your sins being swept away by the current.

- If you don't live near a natural body of water or can't manage to get to one, you can use running water from a hose or faucet.
- It's acceptable to perform *Tashlich* even if you can see the water only from a distance.

2 **Try performing *Tashlich* on *Rosh Hashanah*.** *Tashlich* is supposed to be performed on the first or second day of *Rosh Hashanah*. If, however, you're unable to perform the ceremony on *Rosh Hashanah, Tashlich* can be done any day during the Days of Awe until *Yom Kippur*.

4 **Examine what you've struggled with in the past year before doing *Tashlich*.** *Rosh Hashanah* is a period of self-introspection, and *Tashlich* requires that you review your behavior over the last year before you can cast away your sins. Remember that everyone struggles with mistakes, sins, and accidents, so don't be afraid to be honest with yourself during this period of review.

5 **Take a meditation walk.** After you've thought about your actions over the past year, take some time to consider how you can improve in the upcoming year. Many Jews recommend taking a walk and meditating to think of with ways that you can change your behavior and return to God in the next year. Keep in mind, however, that the goal of *Tashlich* is to move forward in the year, rather than to dwell on the past.

6 **Read the passages of *Tashlich*.** The source passage for *Tashlich* comes from the last verses of the prophet Micah (7:18-20). These verses tell why we practice *Tashlich* and will guide your own practice.

Who is a God like You, Forgiving iniquity and remitting transgression; Who has not maintained wrath forever against the remnant of God's own people, Because God loves graciousness, God will take us back in love; God will cover up our iniquities, You will hurl all our sins Into the depths of the sea. You will keep faith with Jacob, loyalty to Abraham, as You promised on oath.

7 **Collect your "sins" in your pockets.** Use fallen leaves or bird seed to act as physical symbols of your sins. (The tradition of using bread is not healthy for the environment.)

8 **Walk to the body of water or basin.** As you do, take the time to think about your past

year and what you'd like to do better in the upcoming year.

9 **Sing, if it feels appropriate.** Here are some possibilities:

- *Eili, Eili: Eili, Eili shelo yigameri l'olam. Hachol v'hayam, rishrush shel hamayim, b'rak hashamayim, t'filat ha-adam.*
- *Hashiveinu: Hashiveinu, hashiveinu adonai eilecha v'nashuvah, v'nashuvah. Chadeish, chadeish yameinu k'kedem.*
- *Avinu Malkeinu: Avinu malkeinu, choneinu va-aneinu ki ein banu ma-asim. Asei imanu tzedakah vachesed v'hoshi-einu.*

10 **Offer a prayer about your hope for the year.** Talk to God out loud or in your head about your past year and how you plan to do better. Try to be as honest as possible about what has happened during the year and how you want to improve. If you need help with words, try answering some of these questions:

- Am I using my time wisely?
- Was I there for people who needed me?
- Do my relationships reflect *k'dushah*, holiness?
- The kind deed: did I perform it or postpone it? The unnecessary word: Did I say it or hold it back?
- Did I acquire only possessions? Or did I acquire insights and knowledge as well?
- Did I live fully? If not, how can I?

11 **Cast your sins into the body of water.** After your prayer, reach into your pockets and grab the seeds or metaphorical sins, and throw them into the water. When you let

go of them, breathe out and watch them wash away. Only do this when you feel ready. It might take you longer than some other people to prepare for this moment, but don't feel rushed.

By Rabbi Robin Leonard Nafshi, Adapted by Rabbi Michele Medwin