



An Invitation to Connect Tashlikh to the Climate Moment of Right Now

What is Tashlikh?

On *Rosh Hashana* afternoon, it is customary to go to the banks of a river or any flowing stream of water to perform *Tashlikh*. It is traditional to recite a passage from the book of Micah (7:18-20) and from Psalms (118:5-9) and then cast bread into the water to symbolize the casting away of our sins.

The name *Tashlikh* is derived from the book of Micah 7:19: יְשׁוּבֵי יְרִחְמֵנוּ יְכַבֵּשׁ עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְתִשְׁלִיךְ בַּמַּצְלוֹת יָם כָּל-חַטָּאוֹתֵם / God will have compassion on us, forgiving our iniquities; and hurl (*v'tashlikh*) all of our sins into the depths of the sea.

This ceremony continues the theme of our prayers and hopes on *Rosh Hashana*. We pray that God will forgive our shortcomings on this day of judgment and take us back in love and with compassion. As we celebrate the birthday of the world, we embrace new beginnings and possibilities.

We perform this ritual at the water's edge. Water plays an important role in Jewish tradition. In the Creation story, we read of the primordial waters that existed before earth itself and God's spirit hovering over those waters. The waters bring forth the first living things formed during Creation. Prophetic visions occur by the water. People sit by the waters of Babylon and weep. Flowing water symbolizes life, Torah, purification, renewal, and hope.

The Climate Moment of Right Now

This year as we perform *Tashlikh*, we invite you, with the **additional *kavanah*** on page 2 below, to reflect on the moment we are now in and to take note of the precariousness of our lives. Just as we are utterly dependent upon God for sustaining our existence, we are also utterly dependent on the stability of our climate to live.

Let us move from the blasts of the shofar towards our own commitment to individual and communal pathways for climate action. As we open our eyes to the urgency of this moment, let us join together in spirit with those marching in the streets of New York City this weekend calling for a sustainable future for all.

Kavannah: Connecting to the Climate Moment of Right Now

We invite you to recite this additional *Kavanah* / Intention while standing at the water's edge before casting bread into the water:

This year, as we cast away our sins while standing at that liminal place where the habitats of land animals like us and the water creatures converge, let us take stock of planet Earth and of all of her living creatures.

Let us grieve for the skies filled with smoke, the parched ground and sweltering heat in many corners of the world, the fires and floods that sweep away lives and homes, the melting glaciers and rising seas, and the most vulnerable communities unfairly impacted across the globe.

Here at the water's edge, we remember God's spirit sweeping over the primordial water as God set out to create our beautiful and complex world teeming with life and possibility.

Created *b'tzelem elohim*, in the image of God, let us assume our rightful role as active partners with God and as *shomrei ha'adamah*, protectors of the earth.

Let us now choose to face the challenges before us and step into this moment with power and resolve, individually and communally. Let us turn our inaction into action, our indifference into determination and through each step, our despair into hope.

And may God respond:

כִּי־יָמִי בְּחַיַּת לִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מֵעֶבֶר מִיַּד עוֹד עַל־הָאָרֶץ כִּן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מִקֶּצֶף עָלֶיךָ וּמִגְעַר־בְּרֶךְ: כִּי הֵהָרִים יִמוּשׁוּ וְהַגְּבֻעוֹת תִּמְוִטְיָנָה וְחִסְדִּי מֵאֲתֶרְךָ לֹא־יִמוּשׁ וּבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי לֹא תִמּוּט אֲמַר מִרְחֻמֶךָ יְהוָה:

For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; for just as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more flood the earth; so have I sworn that I will not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. For the mountains may move and the hills shake; but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall my covenant of peace be taken away - says God, who has taken you back in love. -Isaiah 54: 9-10

About Jewish Climate Action Network NYC: We are a network of Jews in the New York metropolitan area working in community towards positive solutions to climate change. We stand upon the teachings, traditions and prophetic voices of Judaism that compel us to protect the Earth and her inhabitants. Thank you to Rachel Landsberg, Jeff Levy-Lyons and Ace Leveen for developing the *Kavanah*. For those of you who would like to study Jewish texts related to climate, we have the following dates set aside to learn about Jewish holidays from a climate perspective with Rachel Landsberg: September 27, November 29, April 15 and June 3. Please join us at monthly JCAN meetings on the second Tuesday of each month. Learn more at jcan-nyc.org; email us at info@jcan-nyc.org.