

Laws & Customs: Month of Elul

The Jewish Weekly
For the year 5780

(Up to Erev Rosh Hashanah)

According to Nittei Gavriel, Mishna Berurah and Shulchan Aruch Harav

Based on Rabbi Shmuel Lesches's Halachah Sheets

Compiled by Yossi Fraenkel in memory of his grandparents

ר' ראובן בן הרב משה אליעזר הלוי ע"ה והיה ברכה בת ר' נפתלי משה ע"ה רבינוביץ

ר' יוסף בן ר' אורי ע"ה ומלכה בת ר' יצחק צבי הלוי ע"ה פרנקל

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☞ MONTH OF ELUL

On Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul, people give extra Tzedakah.

It is a Yerushalmi Minhag to go to Kivrei Tzadikim on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul, there are some who specially go to Mearat Hamachpela and Kever Rachel.

On Rosh Chodesh Elul, Moshe Rabbeinu ascended Har Sinai to receive the second set of Luchot. He returned with them on Yom Kippur, with Hashem having granted complete forgiveness for the sin of the golden calf. These forty days are an especially auspicious time for Teshuvah.

The Arizal taught that the thirteen attributes of Divine Mercy are revealed in the month of Elul, assisting in one's efforts to do Teshuvah. The Baal Hatanya explained this idea with the famous parable of Melech B'Sadeh – the King in the field. The month of Elul is thus known as the Chodesh Horachamim (month of mercy), and the gates of mercy are open to all who wish to come close to Hashem through Teshuvah, Tefillah and Torah. These ideas should be publicized as much as possible.

Elul is the month of preparation to usher in a new year replete with good and blessing, both physically and spiritually.

The word Elul is an acronym for a number of Pesukim alluding to the ideas of Torah, Tefillah, Tzedakah, Teshuvah and Geulah. The month of Elul is an appropriate time to increase in all of these matters.

One should increase learning, particularly those topics applicable to the Avodah of the month of Elul.

One should also increase in Ahavat Yisroel and Gemilat-Chessed.

Elul is the "month of reckoning". During this month, one should make an accurate assessment of all one's thoughts, words and deeds, and reflect on all the experiences that occurred during the course of the year. One should improve and strengthen one's qualities, and at the same time, regret and correct one's deficiencies – both the errors and wrongs that were committed, as well as those things which were not performed as well as they could have been. One should resolve for the future to fulfil Mitzvot in the best possible manner; to be more diligent with regards to Torah and Tefillah; and to correct one's negative Middot as well as acquire positive Middot.

During the month of Elul, according to the Sephardic communities, Selichot is recited daily. (The Ashkenazi communities start Selichot this year, Motzei Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah, September 12th.)

During Elul, one should be enthused with much Simcha, in recognition of the special closeness that Hashem shows us – "The King is in the field".

Even though Elul is a time to arouse others to Teshuvah, this should be done in a pleasant and humble way, and not by G-d forbid saying harsh things about others.

☞ L'DAVID HASHEM ORI

We begin reciting L'David Hashem Ori on Rosh Chodesh. Chabad and some other Chassidim start on the **first** day whilst everyone else starts on the **second** day. During Shacharit, some recite it after Aleinu and some, including Chabad, recite it after Shir Shel Yom (or after Borchi Nafshi on Rosh Chodesh). Chabad and some others recite it during Mincha before Aleinu. Some communities recite L'David Hashem Ori at Mincha after Aleinu, and some only after Ma'ariv. When davening Mincha with such a Minyan, one must still recite Aleinu together with them. If one needs to defer L'David Hashem Ori as a result, he should recite it after Aleinu and before Al Tirah.

☞ SHOFAR

Shofar is blown during the month of Elul, most have the custom to begin on Friday, the second day of Rosh Chodesh and some on the first day. The purpose of hearing the Shofar is to arouse feelings of Teshuvah.

Some have the custom to blow Shofar also after Mincha or Maariv. Those who blow Shofar after Maariv, should do so also on Motzei Shabbat

Some have the custom to blow just Tekiah-Shevarim-Teruah-Tekiah and others including Chabad blow ten sounds. [Tekiah-Shevarim-Teruah-Tekiah; Tekiah-Shevarim-Tekiah; Tekiah-Teruah-Tekiah.]

If one was unable to hear the Shofar with a Minyan, he should still endeavor to hear the Shofar.

During Elul, one does not need to repeat the sounds, if the Shofar was Passul (e.g. it had a crack or hole). Similarly, one does not need to repeat any sounds blown incorrectly (e.g. the Tekiah was too short). If the Ba'al-Tokeah chooses to fix his mistake, he certainly does not need to redo the entire section, as he would, were it Rosh Hashana.

☞ OTHER CUSTOMS OF ELUL

There is a tradition from the Ba'al Shem Tov to recite three extra chapters of Tehillim each day of Elul. Ideally, these should be recited immediately after the Tehillim that is normally said at the end of Shacharit.

If one neglected to recite these chapters of Tehillim on the appropriate day, he should do so at the earliest opportunity.

Beginning on the first day of Rosh Chodesh, most including Chabad have the custom to wish (both in person as well as in writing): "Ketivah V'Chatima Tovah L'Shana Tova U'Metukah". [The Lubavitcher Rebbe included these wishes at the end of his letters. From Rosh Chodesh onwards, he would write only "Ketivah V'Chatima Tovah", and would begin adding

"L'Shana Tova U'Metukah" from around the 18th of Elul onwards.]

Although the basic requirement is to check Mezuzot and Tefillin twice every seven years, some have the custom of checking them every Elul (unless they were checked within the last 12 months).

☞ DATES IN ELUL

2 Elul – Shabbat Parshat Shoftim. The first chapter of Pirkei Avot is recited (the Diaspora and some in Israel study the sixth chapter).

9 Elul – Shabbat Parshat Ki Teitzei. When reading the last Passuk of the Parsha, the word Zeicher is read twice, first with a Tzeirei (Zeicher), and then again with a Segol (Zecher).

The second chapter of Pirkei Avot is recited (the Diaspora and some in Israel study the first and second chapters. The opening Mishna ("Kol Yisroel") and concluding Mishna ("Rabbi Chananya") are recited only once).

15 Elul – Being thirty days before Sukkot, one begins learning its Halachot. This thirty-day period should also be utilized to ensure that the Chag needs of the poor are met, as well as planning Sukkot festivities.

16 Elul – Shabbat Parshat Ki Tavo. The third and fourth chapter of Pirkei Avot is recited by all. The opening Mishna ("Kol Yisroel") and concluding Mishna ("Rabbi Chananya") are recited only once.

18 Elul – The birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and the Baal Hatanya. On this day, the Chabad Rebbeim would wish one a "Chag Sameach".

The last 12 days of Elul (18-29 Elul) correspond to the 12 months of the year. On each of these days, one should make a reckoning of the corresponding month, and make all necessary corrections.

☞ 23RD ELUL "SHABBAT MEVARCHIM"

Shabbat Parshat Nitzavim - Vayelech. We don't bentsh the new month before Musaf, however Av Harachamim is recited. The Baal Shem Tov explains that Hashem Himself bentshes the month of Tishrei, and with this power, we bentsh the other months of the year.

Many make a kiddush after davening, in honor of "Shabbat Mevarchim".

Tzidkotecha is recited.

One learns the final two chapters of Pirkei Avot after Mincha. The opening Mishna ("Kol Yisroel") and concluding Mishna ("Rabbi Chananya") are recited only once.

Vi'hi Noam and V'atah Kaddosh are omitted on Motzei Shabbat.

☞ SELICHOT

Due to the very varied customs on Selichot, we advise everyone to make themselves familiar with their own particular customs.



Times for Shabbat & Chag
 All times listed are for Jerusalem only
 as per www.myzmanim.com

Tishrei 5781 - 2020

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| First day Rosh Hashana Candle Lighting 6:05pm Sof Zman Kriat Shma 6:15pm Magen Avraham 8:52am Gra / Baal Hatanya 9:29am Sunset - שקיעה 6:42pm Motzei Chag 6:49pm | Second day Rosh Hashana Candle Lighting 7:17pm Sof Zman Kriat Shma 7:27pm Magen Avraham 8:52am Gra / Baal Hatanya 9:29am Sunset - שקיעה 6:42pm Motzei Chag 7:15pm | Tzom Gedalia Fast starts 5:14am Sof Zman Kriat Shma 5:24am Magen Avraham 8:52am Gra / Baal Hatanya 9:29am Sunset - שקיעה 6:42pm Fast Ends Intactate 7:04pm |
| Yom Kippur Candle Lighting 5:53pm Sof Zman Kriat Shma 6:03pm Magen Avraham 8:54am Gra / Baal Hatanya 9:30am Sunset - שקיעה 6:32pm Motzei Chag 7:04pm | First day Sukkot Candle Lighting 5:47pm Sof Zman Kriat Shma 5:57pm Magen Avraham 8:54am Gra / Baal Hatanya 9:30am Sunset - שקיעה 6:32pm Motzei Shabbat 7:04pm | Simchat Torah Candle Lighting 5:38pm Sof Zman Kriat Shma 5:48pm Magen Avraham 8:56am Gra / Baal Hatanya 9:32am Sunset - שקיעה 6:17pm Motzei Chag 6:49pm |

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