

Class on Elul – Section 4

Selichot

The last 12 days of the month, starting on the 18th of Elul, is when the energy of rectification and renewal gets stronger. Some communities begin reciting daily prayers called, “Slichot” the entire month of Elul (Sephardic) while other communities recite them starting the Shabbos prior to Rosh Hashanah (Chabad). These are beautiful prayers asking for forgiveness. ([See this article](#) for more on Slichot prayers.) Traditionally the last 12 days of this month, starting on the 18th is used to look at each of the last 12 months of the previous year and assess our work in fulfilling our purpose and to recommit to improving next year.

Creation - Last 5 days

The last 5 days of Elul commemorate the first 5 days of creation. We are now counting down to Rosh Hashana, the first of the month of Tishrei, which is the birthday of the creation of man on the 6th day of Creation. After our month-long return back to the innermost part of ourselves and the innermost secret of the universe where there is only forgiveness and unlimited potential, we come prepared for the day-long prayers of the High Holy Days. And hopefully by this time, we have renewed ourselves and rejuvenated our faith that life is a process where we are partners in the co-creation of the ultimate Geula.

Some Tips & Techniques for Teshuvah

We are told that the world stands on 3 things: Torah, Prayer, & Acts of Kindness. These are the things we try to increase in during the month of Elul. Traditionally this means we increase in our spiritual education, prayer, and benevolent behavior toward others. The following are some techniques that can help you to do this.

Torah

Daily Parsha: It's easy to read the Torah portion of the day. It only takes 5-10 minutes because it is very short. The Jewish calendar put out by Chabad gives you the Torah portion on Saturday for the previous week. On Sunday of the following week, the very next portion is read. You can either read this portion on your own by getting yourself a [Chumash](#) or you can read a tiny part of each portion on [this website](#). Inside the Chumash that I have given a link to, you can see how the portion is divided into days if you know how to read Hebrew. On the right side of the pages, you'll see the words in Hebrew: Sheni, Shlishi, Revii, Chamishi, Shishi, & Shevii (the numbers of the days of the week – showing where to start reading for the 2nd day, third, forth, fifth, sixth and seventh. Sometimes you'll see parallels between your life and the daily reading!

Prayer

Morning Blessing: Say the morning blessing when waking up. Translated: “I offer thanks to You, living and eternal King, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great.” The transliteration of that is: Modeh (Modah for females) ani lifanecha Melech Chai Vikayam shechechezarta bin nishmati behemla rabba emunasecha. You can also read Psalm 27 every day of Elul – see translation in a jpg handout in this course.

Shema: You can say the Shema every night before you go to sleep. “Hear Oh Israel! The Lord our G-d, the Lord is One.” Transliterated: Shema A-don-ai El-ohainu! A-don-ai Echad!

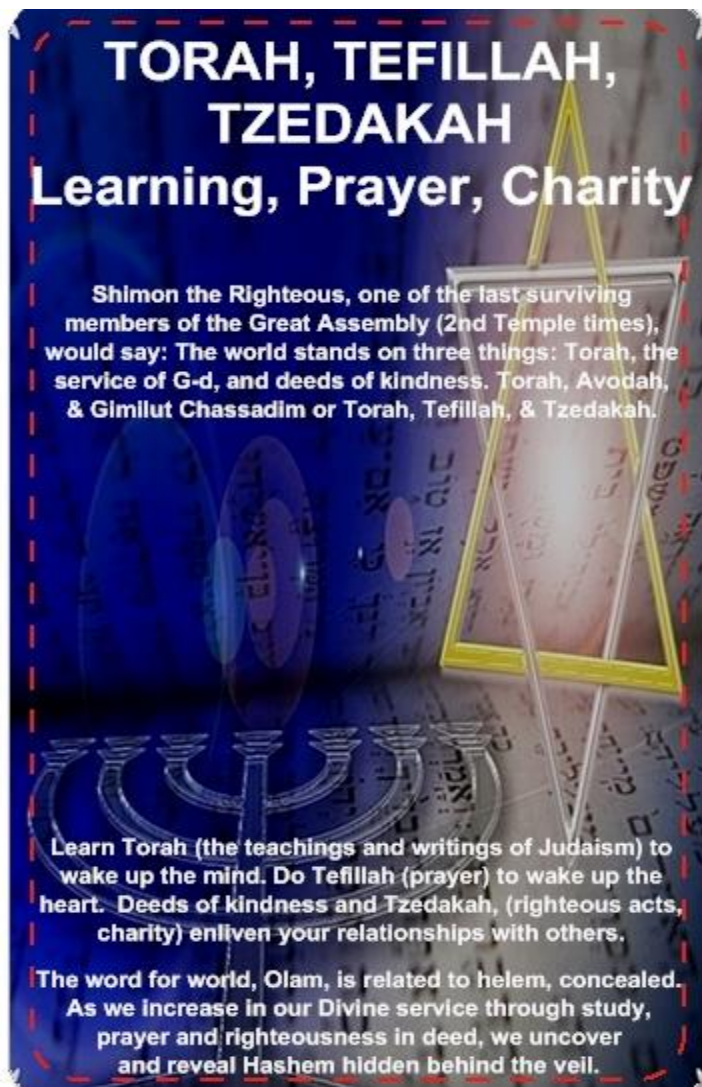
Blessing on Food: Pick a meal and say a blessing before eating. See jpg handout included in class for specific prayers for different food items.

Get a Siddur (Jewish Prayer book): Here’s one from [Amazon](#)

Acts of Kindness

Make a List: Make a list of family members and then write down those things that you’d like to change in how you relate to them. Pick one of these and let that be your practice for this month.

Tzedakah: Fill a charity box with a coin every day of this month. Or find one charitable organization to give some money to.



Assignment: Pick one or two of the actions listed above from each category of Teshuvah, Tefillah, and Tzedakah to commit to doing in the coming year.

