

# Elul: The Art of Starting Again | Class 1

Source Sheet by Rabbi David Chapman

Components of Spiritual Preparation during Elul...

- Shofar
- Tehillim (Psalms)
- Selichot (penitential prayers)
- Tzedakah (acts of charity and justice)
- Teshuvah (Return)

**Exodus 34:1-7**

(1) ה' said to Moses: "Carve two tablets of stone like the first, and I will inscribe upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered. (2) Be ready by morning, and in the morning come up to Mount Sinai and present yourself there to Me, on the top of the mountain. (3) No one else shall come up with you, and no one else shall be seen anywhere on the mountain; neither shall the flocks and the herds graze at the foot of this mountain." (4) So Moses carved two tablets of stone, like the first, and early in the morning he went up on Mount Sinai, as ה' had commanded him, taking the two stone tablets with him. (5) ה' came down in a cloud—and stood with him there, proclaiming the name .ה' ה' (6)' passed before him and

שמות ל"ד:א-ז

(א) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פָּסֹל־לָךְ שְׁנַיִם־לְחֹת אֲבָנִים כַּרְאשׁוֹנִים וְכַתְּבֵתְלִי עַל־הֶלְחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל־הֶלְחֹת הַרְאשׁוֹנִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ: (ב) וְהָיָה נִכּוֹן לְבַקֵּר וְעָלִיתָ בַבֶּקֶר אֶל־הַר סִינַי וְנִצַּבְתָּ לִּי שָׁם עַל־רֹאשׁ הַהָר: (ג) וְאִישׁ לֹא־יַעֲלֶה עִמָּךְ וְגַם־אִישׁ אֶל־יִרְא בְּכָל־הָהָר גַּם־הַצֹּאן וְהַבְּקָר אֶל־יָרְעוּ אֶל־מֹול הָהָר הַהוּא: (ד) וַיִּפְסֹל שְׁנַיִם־לְחֹת אֲבָנִים כַּרְאשׁוֹנִים וַיִּשְׁפֹּם מֹשֶׁה בַבֶּקֶר וַיַּעַל אֶל־הַר סִינַי כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֹתוֹ וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ שְׁנַיִם לְחֹת אֲבָנִים: (ה) וַיֵּרָד ה' בְּעָנָן וַיִּתְיַצֵּב עִמּוֹ שָׁם וַיְקַרָּא בְּשֵׁם ה': (ו) וַיַּעֲבֹר ה' וַעֲלֵ־פָנָיו וַיִּקְרָא ה' וְה' אֵל רַחֲוֹם וְחַנּוּן אַרְךָ אָפַיִם וְרַב־חַסֵּד וְאַמֶּת: (ז) נִצַּר הַסֵּד

proclaimed: “ה' יהוה! ה'! a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, (7) extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin—yet not remitting all punishment, but visiting the iniquity of parents upon children and children’s children, upon the third and fourth generations.”

לְאֵלִים נְשָׂא עֲוֹן וּפְשַׁע וְחַטָּאת וְנִקְיָה  
 לֹא יִנָּקֶה פֶּקֶד וְעֲוֹן אָבוֹת עַל-בָּנִים  
 וְעַל-בְּנֵי בָנִים עַל-שְׁלֵשִׁים  
 וְעַל-רַבְעִים:

**Kitzur Shulchan Arukh 128**

**(1) [The days] from *Rosh Chodesh Elul* until after *Yom Kippur*, are days of Divine favor [and acceptance.]** Even though throughout the entire year the Holy One, blessed is He, accepts the repentance of those who return to Him wholeheartedly, nevertheless, these days are unexcelled and most suitable for repentance, because they are days of mercy and favor. On *Rosh Chodesh Elul*, Moshe went up Mount Sinai to receive the Second Tablets; he remained there for forty days, and came down on the tenth day of *Tishrei* when the atonement was completed. From then on these days have been designated as days of Divine favor [and acceptance,] and the tenth day of *Tishrei* as *Yom Kippur* [Day of Atonement]...

**קיצור שלחן ערוך קכ"ח**

(א) מֵרֵאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ אֱלוּל עַד אַחֵר יוֹם  
 הַכַּפּוּרִים, הֵמָּה יְמֵי רְצוֹן. וְאֵף כִּי  
 בְּכָל הַשָּׁנָה הַקְּדוּשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מְקַבֵּל  
 תְּשׁוּבָה מִן הַשָּׁבִים אֵלָיו בְּלֵב שָׁלֵם,  
 מְכַל מְקוֹם יָמִים אֵלּוּ מִבְּחָרִים יוֹתֵר  
 וּמִזְמָנִים לְתִשׁוּבָה, לְהִיתָם יְמֵי  
 רַחֲמִים וְיְמֵי רְצוֹן, כִּי בְּרֵאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ  
 אֱלוּל, עָלָה מֹשֶׁה אֶל הַר סִינַי לְקַבֵּל  
 לוחות שְׁנִיִּים, וְנִשְׁתַּהֲהָ שָׁם אַרְבָּעִים  
 יוֹם, וַיֵּרֵד בְּעֶשְׂרֵה בְּתִשְׁרֵי, שְׁהָיָה אִזּוֹ  
 גִּמְרַת כַּפָּרָה. וּמִן אִזּוֹ הִקְדִּישׁוּ יָמִים אֵלּוּ  
 לְיְמֵי רְצוֹן, וְיוֹם עֲשִׂירֵי בְּתִשְׁרֵי לְיוֹם  
 הַכַּפּוּרִים.

**Exodus 21:13**

(13) If he did not do it by design, but it came about by an act of God, I **will assign you** a place to which he can flee.

**Kitzur Shulchan Arukh 128:1**

The Ari (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria), of blessed memory, wrote, "If he did not lie in ambush but Hashem made it happen, then I will provide ..." (Exodus 21:13) The initials of the words [*ina le'yado vesamti lecha*] form the acronym *Elul*, to indicate that this month is a favorable time for repentance to be accepted for the sins committed during the entire year. It also alludes to the fact that sins done inadvertently also require repentance during this month.

**from "Return" by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat**

But every year  
the ascent through Elul  
does its magic,  
shakes old bitterness  
from our hands and hearts.

We sit awake, itemizing  
ways we want to change.

**שמות כ"א:י"ג**

(יג) וַאֲשֶׁר לֹא צָדָה וְהֵאֱלֹהִים אָנָּה  
לְיָדוֹ וְשַׁמְתִּי לָהּ מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יָנוּס  
שָׁמָּה: (ס)

**קיצור שלחן ערוך קכ"ח:א'**

הַרְבֵּי אֲדוּנָנוּ רַבִּי יִצְחָק לִוְרִיא  
זְכוּרָנוּ לְבִרְכָה פְּתַב, וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא צָדָה  
וְהֵאֱלֹהִים אָנָּה לְיָדוֹ וְשַׁמְתִּי לָהּ,  
רְאִשֵׁי תַבּוֹת אֵלּוּל, לֹזֶמֶר כִּי חֹדֶשׁ  
זֶה, הוּא עֵת רְצוֹן לְקַבֵּל תְּשׁוּבָה עַל  
הַחֲטָאִים שֶׁעָשָׂה בְּכָל הַשָּׁנָה. וְגַם  
רְמֵז שְׁגָם עַל הַשְּׂגָגוֹת צָרִיךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת  
תְּשׁוּבָה בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה.

We try not to mind  
that this year's list  
looks just like last...