

ELUL

The *Molad*: Sunday morning, 10:43 and 10 portions.

The moon may be sanctified until Monday, the 15th, 5:05 a.m.¹

The first day of Rosh Chodesh is on Sunday.

On this day, we begin reciting *L'David Hashem ori* (“By David. The L-rd is my light...”), after the Song of the Day in the **Morning Service**, and before *Aleinu* in the **Afternoon Service**. (We continue this practice until, and including, Hoshana Rabbah.)

Our custom is to recite only one Mourner’s *Kaddish* after all the psalms (i.e., the Song of the Day, *L'David ori*, and *Barchi nafshi*) are recited. Similarly, in the Afternoon Service, only one Mourner’s *Kaddish* is recited after *L'David ori* and *Aleinu*.

During this day, the *shofar* is sounded for practice.

The second day of Rosh Chodesh is on Monday.

Every day of this month, with the exception of Shabbos and the day preceding Rosh HaShanah, we sound the *shofar* at the end of the Morning Service. Our custom is to sound the series of *tekiyah-shevarim-teruah-tekiyah* blasts, then the series *tekiyah-shevarim-tekiyah*, and then the series *tekiyah-teruah-tekiyah*.

From the second day of Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom Kippur, in addition to the daily recitation of Psalms according to the monthly cycle, we recite three extra psalms each day (on the first day, Psalms 1-3; on the second, 4-6; etc.). On Yom Kippur itself, we complete the *T'hillim*, reciting 36 extra psalms: 9 before *Kol Nidrei*, 9 before going to sleep, 9 after *Mussaf*, and 9 after *N'ilah*.

If a person did not start this practice on the second day of Rosh Chodesh, he should start on the day he remembers, and then make up for the previous days.²

People who are precise in their observance of the *mitzvos* have their *t'fillin* and *mezuzos* checked during this month, and review carefully their observance of

1. The times for sanctifying the moon are based on Jerusalem Standard Time.

2. *HaYom Yom*, Elul 1.

the Torah and its *mitzvos*, correcting any flaws in their conduct.

Elul 6, Shabbos Parshas Shoftim.

We recite the sixth chapter of *Pirkei Avos* following the Afternoon Service.

Elul 13, Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei.

The Rebbe instructed that when reading the concluding verse of the *Parshah* (*D'varim* 25:19) and when repeating it in *Maftir*, the word זכר in the phrase זכר עמלק should be read twice: first with a *tzeirei* (*zeicher*) and then with a *segol* (*zecher*).

(The Alter Rebbe instructed that the word דכָנָ (D'varim 23:2) in the Torah scroll should be written with an *alef* at the end, not with a *hei*.³)

We recite the first and second chapters of *Pirkei Avos* following the Afternoon Service.

Elul 15, Monday.

This day marks the anniversary of the founding of *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*, the Central Lubavitcher *Yeshivah*, in Lubavitch, in 5657 (1897).

The actual studying of *Nigleh* and *Chassidus* began on the 18th of Elul 5657 (1897).

Elul 18, Thursday, Chai Elul.

This day marks the birthday of “the two great luminaries,” the **Baal Shem Tov** in 5458 (1698) and the **Alter Rebbe** in 5505 (1745).⁴

Elul 20, Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo.

In the Torah reading, it is customary for the reader to raise his voice slightly when reading the verse *Hashkifah mim'on kodsh'cha* (*D'varim* 26:15).⁵

For the sixth *aliyah*, the reader ascends to the Torah without being called. He recites the blessings before and after the Torah reading.

We recite the third and fourth chapters of *Pirkei Avos* following the Afternoon Service.

On Motzaei Shabbos, we begin the recitation of *S'lichos* immediately after halachic midnight. On the following days, they are recited shortly before dawn or in the early hours of the morning.

When rising to say *S'lichos* before dawn, one

3. *Sefer HaMinhagim*, p. 62.

4. *Sefer HaSichos* 5703, p. 188.

5. See *Talmud Yrushalmi, Maaser Sheni* 5:9.

should recite the **Morning Blessings** and the blessings on the Torah. One should not recite the blessing *Hanosein lasechvi...* (“...who gives the rooster understanding...”) unless he actually hears a rooster crow. Nor should he recite the blessing *She’asah li kol tzorki* unless he is wearing leather shoes. After daybreak, however, these blessings should be recited.

The *chazan* recites *S’lichos* while robed in a *tallis*. If he puts it on at night (before dawn), however, he should not recite a blessing.

The *S’lichos* prayers begin with *Ashrei* and a half-*Kaddish*, and then follow the prescribed order. We recite *Ashamnu* (“We have transgressed...”) only once. We do not prostrate ourselves when reciting the passage *Vayomer David el Gad* (“And David said to Gad...”). The *chazan* concludes with a full *Kaddish*.

If a person recites *S’lichos* without a *minyan*, he should not recite the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, nor any of the passages written in Aramaic – *Machei u’masei* (“He wounds and He heals...”) and the two paragraphs beginning *Maran* (“Our Master...”).

There are many who follow the custom of fasting on the first day of *S’lichos*.

Elul 27, Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim.

We do not bless the new month of Tishrei, but we recite *T’hillim* as on every Shabbos M’varchim. (The **Alter Rebbe** said in the name of the **Baal Shem Tov**: “Tishrei is blessed by the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself. And with the power of this blessing, the Jews bless the other eleven months of the year.”⁶)

Both the seventh *aliyah* and the *Maftir* begin at *D’varim* 30:15.

We recite the passage *Av barachamim*.⁷

We recite the fifth and sixth chapters of *Pirkei Avos* following the Afternoon Service.

On Motzaei Shabbos, we do not say *Vibi noam* or *V’Atah kadosh*.

Elul 29, Monday, Erev Rosh HaShanah 5782.

This day marks the birthday of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, **Rabbi Menachem Mendel**, in 5549 (1789).

On this day, a person in the seven days of the *shivah*

6. *HaYom Yom*, Elul 25.

7. See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech* 5750, sec. 10.

mourning may attend the synagogue to recite *S'lichos*.

The *Tachanun* supplications are recited in *S'lichos*, but not in the Morning or Afternoon Services.

The *shofar* is not sounded.

After the **Morning Service**, we perform *hataras nedarim*, the release of vows. This should preferably be performed in the presence of a quorum of 10. It is necessary to understand the words one is reading. A person who does not understand the Hebrew should read the passages in his native tongue. (We do not recite the *Seder Nezifah* found in some *siddurim*.)

As the coming year is a *Shemittah* year, in which debts are remitted, we make a *pruzbul* (a declaration making possible the collection of such debts) in the presence of a *bais din* of three scholars.

(The Alter Rebbe writes that the most preferable time to make a *pruzbul* is at the end of the sixth year of the *Shemittah* cycle, before Rosh HaShanah of the seventh year. Although the remittance of loans takes effect only at the end of the year, there are authorities who hold that it is forbidden to demand repayment of loans as soon as the seventh year begins.)

There are many people who fast on this day. If, however, they encounter a feast associated with a *mitzvah*, they may take part and eat. It is not necessary for them to have this vow released.

We cut our hair and go to the *mikvah*.

The Rebbe initiated the practice of assisting the needy with the extra expenses for all the festivals of the month of Tishrei.⁸

Before the evening, we put on our festive garments, confident that G-d will miraculously favor us in judgment and look upon us with the attribute of mercy. “He alone judges all created beings.”

L'shanah tovah nikaseiv v'neichaseim.

May we all be inscribed and sealed for a good year, with abundant material and spiritual blessings, including the greatest blessing, the coming of *Moshiach*. Amen!



8. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIV, pp. 369ff.