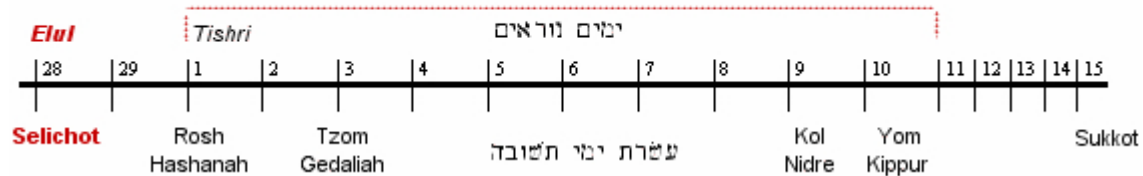




# Elul and Selichot

## The Season of Teshuvah

### Days of Awe



שׁוֹבֵה נֹשְׁבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל נִאֻם יְהוָה לֹא אֶפְיֵל פְּנֵי בְּכֶם כִּי־חֹסֵד אֲנִי  
 נִאֻם יְהוָה לֹא אֶטּוֹר לְעוֹלָם:

Return, faithless Israel, declares the LORD. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the LORD; I will not be angry forever. - Jer 3:12

### Introduction

Elul is the 6th month of the Biblical calendar (late summer/early fall), the month set apart for repentance, or *teshuvah*, in spiritual preparation for the High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur). If you were to count from Tishri as the first month of the calendar (as the Rabbinic tradition does), Elul would be the last month of the year -- a time to make “New Years Resolutions” and to turn away from sin before the start of the New Year. The month of Elul is therefore a time each year to prepare for the *Yamim Nora'im*, the Days of Awe, by getting our spiritual house in order.

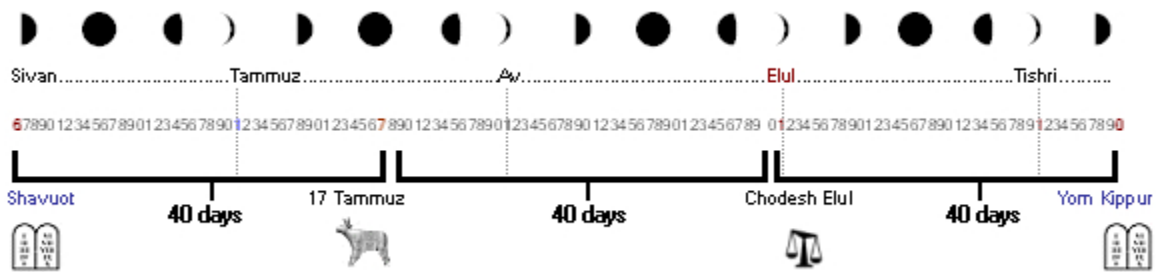


### Background at Sinai

Every year the “Season of Teshuvah” runs forty days from the first day of the Hebrew month of Elul to Yom Kippur. During this time we make every effort to repent, or “turn [shuv] toward God.” In Jewish tradition, these 40 days are called *Yemei Ratzon* (יְמֵי רָצוֹן) - “Days of Favor,” since it was during this time that the LORD forgave the Jewish nation after the sin of the Golden Calf (Pirke d’Reb Eliezar). Some have likened these 40 days to the number of weeks it takes for the human fetus to be formed within the womb. Teshuvah is a sort of death and rebirth: a death of the past life and the birth of a new life and a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). It is an awakening from the sleep induced by sin, and manifests itself as the power of the Holy Spirit working in the heart of the believer who trusts in God’s salvation through Yeshua. Therefore the Ruach HaKodesh gives us spiritual life that enables us to be “conformed” (i.e., *σύμμορφος*, “formed together”) with Yeshua’s purpose (*ratzon*) in this world (Rom. 8:28-30). God’s Favor is most fully revealed in the character (*χαρακτήρ*) of His Son (Heb. 1:3).



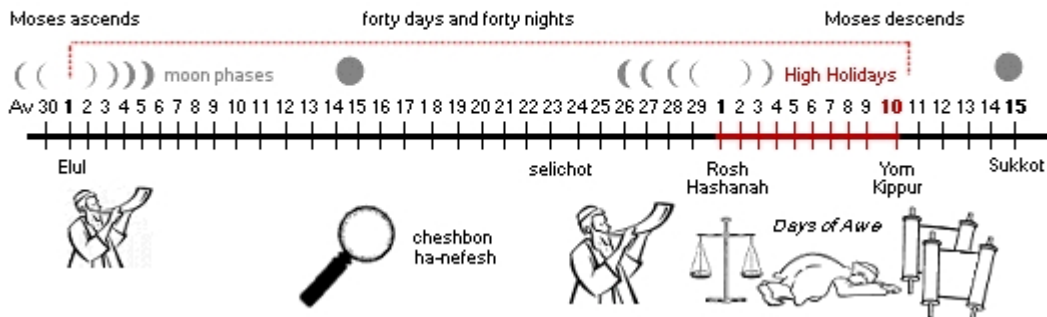
But why forty days? Do we really need that much time to prepare ourselves to repent and make confession for our sins? Jewish tradition determined that the forty days came from Israel's experience at Sinai (Yeshua also spent "40 days" in the wilderness). According to Rashi, Moses ascended Mount Sinai no less than three times for forty days and nights. The first ascent began on the 6th of Sivan, 50 days after the Exodus, when Moses first received the Ten Commandments and began learning the details of the Torah (this corresponds to the holiday of Shavuot). When he descended and saw the people worshipping the Golden Calf, however, he smashed the tablets (Exod. 32:19). According to tradition, this occurred on the 17th of Tammuz, a date later associated with calamity for Israel. On the following day Moses burned the Golden Calf and judged the transgressors. He then reascended on the 19th of Tammuz and interceded on behalf of Israel for 40 more days (until the 29th of Av), though he descended the mountain without assurance. God then called Moses the following day, on Elul 1, to ascend a third time to receive a new set of tablets. Forty more days and nights were spent receiving the revelation of Torah at Sinai. Moses finally descended on Tishri 10 - Yom Kippur - with the second set of tablets in hand and the assurance of God's forgiveness:



### Forty Days of Teshuvah

According to Jewish tradition, then, the month of Elul represents the time that Moses spent on Sinai preparing the second set of tablets after the idolatrous incident of the Golden Calf. Moses ascended on Rosh Chodesh Elul ("Head of the Month of Elul") and then descended 40 days later on the 10th of Tishri, the end of Yom Kippur, when the repentance of the people was complete. The month of Elul therefore represents the time of national sin and forgiveness obtained by means of teshuvah before the LORD.

## Elul & the Season of Teshuvah





**Note:** For a variety of reasons, Rosh Chodesh Elul is observed for two days, the 30th of Av and again on Elul 1. It is now customary to observe the 29 days of Elul as a time of “soul searching,” or *cheshbon hanefesh* (חֶשְׁבוֹן הַנֶּפֶשׁ), and offering prayers for forgiveness (selichot) in anticipation of the Ten High Holy Days. The appointed season of teshuvah (repentance) therefore runs 40 days from the last day of the month of Av to Yom Kippur.

### Listening to the Shofar (שׁוֹפָר)

Beginning on Rosh Chodesh Elul and continuing until the day before Rosh Hashanah, it is customary to blow the *shofar* (ram’s horn) every day (except for Shabbat). This practice was adopted to awaken us for the coming High Holidays.

The custom is to first blow *tekiah* (תְּקִיעָה), a long single blast (the sound of the King’s coronation), followed by *shevarim* (שְׁבָרִים), three short, wail-like blasts (signifying repentance), followed by *teruah* (תְּרוּעָה), several short blasts of alarm (to awaken the soul), and to close with *tekiah hagadol* (תְּקִיעָה הַגָּדוֹל), a long, final blast.



*Visit the Hebrew for Christians website for sound examples as well as the Shofar Blessing study card.*

### The Theme of Repentance (תְּשׁוּבָה)

The following appeal from the prophet Isaiah is considered thematic for this season:

דִּרְשׁוּ יְהוָה בְּהִמָּצְאוֹ קְרֹאֵהוּ בְּהִיּוֹתוֹ קְרוֹב

dir-shu Adonai be-him-matz-o, ke-ra-u-hu bi-yo-to ka-rov

Seek the LORD while he may be found;  
call upon him while he is near (Isa. 55:6)

The passage continues: “Let the wicked man forsake his way (i.e., *derekh*: דֶּרֶךְ), and the perverse man his thoughts (i.e., *machshavah*: מַחְשָׁבָה); and let him return (i.e., *shuv*: שׁוּב) to the LORD, that He may have compassion (i.e., *rachamim*: רַחֲמִים) on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon (i.e., *selichah*: סְלִיחָה)” (Isa. 55:7).



### About the name "Elul" (אֱלוּל)

In the Torah, the month of Elul is simply called the sixth month of the Jewish year. The name *Elul* was "imported" by the Jews after their 70 year exile in Babylon (it is thought to originally come from an Akkadian word meaning "harvest"). Some commentators note that the word may also come from the root of the verb "search" in Aramaic, thus implying that this month should a time of soul-searching or "cheshbon ha-nefesh" (חֶשְׁבוֹן הַנֶּפֶשׁ).

The name *Elul* is claimed to be an acronym of *ani l'dodi v'dodi li*, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine," a quote from *Song of Solomon* 6:3, where the Beloved is the LORD and the "I" is the *Kallat Mashiach*, the Bride of Messiah:

*I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine...*



Although it is a somber time of soul-searching, Elul reminds us of the high calling we have to examine ourselves and prepare ourselves as the spotless and blameless Bride of the Mashiach (2 Peter 3:14).

Note that the end of each letter in this phrase is a Yod (י), which has the numeric value of 10, so the phrase itself can be combined to the number 40, reminding us of the forty days of teshuvah that lead up to Yom Kippur.

There are other allusions to the word Elul found in the Scriptures. For example, Deuteronomy 30:6 states that God will circumcise "your heart and the heart of your offspring," or in Hebrew, אֶת־לִבְךָ וְאֶת־לִבְבֶן־אִיִּשְׁךָ, which is said to be an acronym for the word Elul (אֱלוּל). Indeed, the gematria for the Hebrew word is the same for "understanding" (בִּינָה), hinting at Isaiah 6:10: "his heart will understand and turn and be healed." Yeshua circumcises the hearts of those who trust in Him (Col. 2:11). His favor rests upon those who genuinely turn to God. Trusting in His sacrifice on the cross satisfies God's righteous judgment and gives us understanding to fulfill His deeper purposes.

In Exodus 18:7 we read about how Yitro and Moses were reunited after the Exodus and asked about one another's welfare. In Hebrew, the phrase, "And each friend asked of the other's welfare" is וַיִּשְׁאַלְוּ אִישׁ־לְרֵעֵהוּ לְשָׁלוֹם, can be rearranged into an acronym for the word Elul (אֱלוּל). This allusion has led to the custom of inquiring about the welfare of family and friends during this season, and the practice of sending "Shanah Tovah" cards wishing them a sweet and good New Year.





## Psalm 27 – the High Holidays Psalm

It is a custom to sing or read the Book of Psalms during the month of Elul. In the famous Song of Moses, it is written: וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְאָמֹר אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה / “and they spoke, saying: ‘I will sing to the LORD’ (Exod. 15:1). This phrase can be formed into an acronym for Elul, and the sages therefore reasoned that hearing the Psalms were vital during the Season of Repentance and Days of Favor.

Of all the Psalms, however, Psalm 27 is considered central one of the season, however. The midrash on the Psalms states that the word *ori* (אֹרִי), “my light,” refers to Rosh Hashanah (based on Psalm 37:6) whereas the word *yishi* (יִשְׁעִי), “my salvation,” refers to the atonement given on Yom Kippur. King David also mentions that God would hide him in his *sukkah* (בְּסֻכָּה) in the time of trouble, referring to the holiday of Sukkot (Psalm 27:5). Since all three of these holidays are alluded to in this Psalm, Psalm 27 is regarded as the key Psalm for the Fall Holidays of the Jewish year.

יְהוָה אֹרִי וְיִשְׁעִי מִמִּי אִירָא  
יְהוָה מְעוֹז־חַיִּי מִמִּי אֶפְחָד

Adonai o-ri ve-yish-i, mi-mi i-ra  
Adonai ma-oz chai-yai, mi-mi ef-chad

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?  
The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1)

Finally, Psalm 27:13 contains a textual oddity. It is often translated: “Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” The word often translated “unless” is *lulei* (לֹלֵא), which read backwards spells Elul (אֱלֹל). This is said to suggest that salvation comes from faith that sees the goodness of the LORD. Repentance is only really possible if we believe in the goodness and love of the Lord “in the land of the living.”





## Selichot Services

The Hebrew word *selichah* (סְלִיחָה) means “forgiveness” in colloquial Hebrew, but in the Scriptures it refers exclusively to God's offer of pardon and forgiveness of the repentant sinner. For instance, in Psalm 130:4 we read, "But with you there is forgiveness (s'lichah), that you may be feared" (בִּי־עֲמֹד הַסְּלִיחָה לְמַעַן תִּירָא).

The plural form of the word *selichah* is *selichot* (סְלִיחוֹת), a word traditionally used to refer to additional prayers for forgiveness recited during the month of Elul (through Yom Kippur). These prayers and poems for mercy are usually recited before dawn, before the daily *shacharit* (morning) service (you can obtain a Selichot prayerbook at any good Jewish bookstore). The list of the Thirteen Attributes of God's Mercy (*Shelosh Esrei Middot shel Rachamim*) are the primary focus of the prayers, based on the Talmud's statement that, "Whenever the nation of Israel sins, let them pray this prayer (i.e., the Thirteen Attributes) and I shall forgive them" (Rosh Hashanah 17b). In general, Selichot services are intended to guide us toward an examination of our lives and to undergo *teshuvah*.

In Sephardic tradition, Selichot services begin at the start of Elul and run until Yom Kippur (similar to the 40 days Moses spent on Mount Sinai), though in the Ashkenazic tradition they are recited late (i.e., midnight) on the Saturday night prior to Rosh Hashanah. Some of the prayers and music for the Selichot service are taken from the services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, providing a transition between the "old year" and the New Year. A Chassidic tradition holds that the last twelve days of the year (i.e., Elul 18 to 29) correspond to the twelve months of the closing year: on each of these twelve days, the penitent should review the deeds and achievements of its corresponding month.

# סליחות Selichot





### Appealing to God’s Compassion

After the Jews had committed the grievous sin with the Golden Calf, Moses despaired of the Jews ever being able to find favor in God’s eyes again. God, however (as explained in the Talmud (Tractate Rosh Hashanah 17b)) donned a tallit, and, in the role of a chazzan, showed Moses the order of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, called *Shelosh Esrei Middot*. In the synagogue, the “Selichot service” is built upon a recitation of these thirteen merciful attributes that the LORD revealed (see Exodus 34:6-7):

שֵׁלֶשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה מִדּוֹת

<sup>6</sup>יְהוָה <sup>1</sup>יְהוָה <sup>2</sup>אֵל <sup>3</sup>רַחוּם <sup>4</sup>וְתַנּוּן <sup>5</sup>אֶרֶךְ <sup>6</sup>אֲפַיִם  
<sup>7</sup>וְרַב־חֶסֶד <sup>8</sup>וְאֱמֶת:  
<sup>9</sup>נֹצֵר חֶסֶד לְאֱלֹפִים <sup>10</sup>נִשְׂא עוֹן וּפְשָׁע <sup>11</sup>וְהַטָּאָה <sup>12</sup>  
<sup>13</sup>וְנִקָּה לֹא יִנְקָה פֶקֶד עוֹן אָבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים  
 וְעַל־בְּנֵי בָנִים עַל־שְׁלִשִׁים וְעַל־רִבְעִים:

“The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” (KJV)





According to traditional interpretations, the thirteen attributes are articulated as follows:

1. The LORD (יהוה) - I, the LORD, am the Compassionate Source of all of life and Ground of all being; I am the breath of life for all of creation. I am the God of all possible worlds and Master of the universe. Everything that exists is an expression of my loving will and kindness: *olam chesed yibaneh*: "The world is built with chesed" (Psalm 89:3[h]). Since the relative difference between existence and non-existence is infinite, God's creation represents infinite kindness, and since you exist, you likewise are expression of God's kindness and love. You do not exist because God needs you but solely because your life is willed by God as an expression of His love.
2. The LORD (יהוה) - Though the LORD created the universe "very good", He remained the Compassionate Source of life even after mankind sinned, and therefore the Name is repeated to refer to His loving relationship with alienated, fallen creation. I, the LORD, am also compassionate to one who has sinned and repented (i.e., the Creator gives us free will and the good gift of teshuvah). God created the mankind for the sake of teshuvah - that is, our return to Him. God desires atonement with mankind even after sin and therefore continues to give existence to the world. "He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). Moreover, as the Savior and Redeemer of the world through Yeshua, the LORD reveals kindness even to the evil, and even partakes of its presence by means of His sacrificial love on the cross. Since teshuvah can only exist after the advent of sin, Yeshua is called the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:20).
3. *El* - I, the LORD, am God the Almighty and Omnipotent;
4. *Rachum*: I, the LORD, am merciful (*rachamim*) means "mercy" and *rechem* means "womb");
5. *Ve'chanun*: I, the LORD, am gracious; I pour out my favor freely to all of creation (*chen* is the word for "grace");
6. *Erech Apayim*: I, the LORD, am slow to anger and patient (the word *erekh* means "long" and *af* means "nose." The idiom means "long suffering, patient");
7. *Verav Chesed*: God is abundant in kindness to both the righteous and the wicked;
8. *Ve'emet*: God is truthful and faithful in carrying out promises;
9. *Notzer Chesed La'alafim*: God extends kindness for a thousand generations, taking into account the merit of our worthy ancestors (*zechut avot*);
10. *Nosei Avon*: God forgives iniquity, defined in the tradition as wrongful deeds committed with premeditation;
11. *Vafesha*: God forgives transgression, defined as wrongful deeds committed in a rebellious spirit;
12. *Vechata'ah*: God forgives sin, those wrongful deeds that were inadvertent;
13. *Venakeh*: God will not cancel all punishment, only for those who are repentent.





In addition to the Shelosh Esrei Middot, the chanting of a number of psalms and prayerful poems (*piyyutim*) are recited during services throughout the month of Elul. The tone of a Selichot service is set in Psalm 130:

”Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.”

As Messianic believers, we affirm that forgiveness is obtained by exercising *emunah* (faith) in the sacrifice of Yeshua as the *kapparah* for our sins, and by evidencing wholehearted *teshuvah* in our daily life. In Rabbinic Judaism, however, Selichot are said as a means of rendering a favorable verdict of “din,” or “judgment” by God during the Days of Awe.

“Sin” (*chet* in Hebrew) means “failure in our relationship with the LORD.” Our goal should be to continually move closer to the LORD, but *chet* causes us to move away from Him. *Teshuvah* means “return” and the period of Selichot is therefore set apart as a means of returning to the LORD:

כִּי אָדָם אֵין צַדִּיק בְּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה-טוֹב וְלֹא יִחַטָּא

*For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*

- *Kohélet 7:20*



## What is Teshuvah?

The theme of the Jewish High Holidays is *teshuvah* (תשובה), a word often translated as “repentance,” though it’s more accurately understood as turning back (*shuv*) to God. The root of this verb occurs nearly 1,000 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and first occurs when God told Adam he would “return to the earth” (Gen. 3:19). In spiritual terms, *shuv* may be regarded as both a turning away from evil and a turning toward the good, though Jewish thinking regards turning to God as the means by which we turn away from evil. This act of turning has the power to redirect a person’s destiny. It effects the whole life of the soul. As Abraham Heschel wrote, “No word is God’s final word. Judgment, far from being absolute, is conditional. A change in man’s conduct brings about a change in God’s judgment” (Heschel: *The Prophets*, 194). In the ancient Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures (i.e., the Septuagint, or LXX), *shuv* is translated using the word *strepheo* (στρέφω), which means to turn around, or to turn back to God.

The Greek word sometimes translated “repentance” is *metanoia* (μετάνοια), which literally means “changing your thinking” (from *meta* (after, with) and *noeo* (to think)). It is often the word used to translate the Hebrew word *nacham* (נחם), often associated with the emotion of regret (in the old King James Version of the Bible, *nacham* is sometimes confusingly translated using the word “repent”).

The New Testament follows the LXX by using the Greek verb *metanao* (μετανοέω) to express the Hebrew idea of *nacham* (i.e., regret or repentance), and it uses the verb *strepheo* (στρέφω) to express the idea of *shuv* (i.e., turning to God and away from evil). *Metanao* means expressing regret and remorse over the bankruptcy of our personal philosophy of how the world should be run. We surrender to God’s truth, forsake the selfish demands of the ego, and “let God be God.” *Strepheo*, on the other hand, is a literal or metaphorical turning. When applied to God, it means turning all of your “heart, soul, and strength” back to Him. Indeed, the LXX exclusively uses this word to translate the Hebrew word *shuv* (שוב), from which we get the word *teshuvah*. For example, “If you return, O Israel” is אָם-תָּשׁוּב יִשְׂרָאֵל in the original Hebrew, but is translated as ἐὰν ἐπιστραφή Ἰσραηλ in the LXX (Jer. 4:1). Likewise, “Return, O Israel” is שׁוּבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל in the Hebrew but is translated as in the ἐπιστράφητι Ἰσραηλ in the LXX (Hos. 14:1). In a sense, we can say that *nacham/metanao* concerns the past (regret), whereas *shuv/strepheo* concerns the present..

While it is important that we “regret our thinking” (μετανοέω) and embrace the authority of God as the first principle in all our reasoning (λόγος), it is equally important that we exercise our *wills* by turning to the LORD (στρέφω) through acts of repentance (e.g., prayer, confession, turning away from sinful practices, offering *tzedakah*, and so on).



According to Jewish tradition, genuine teshuvah involves four basic steps:

1. **Forsake the sin** (Prov. 28:13). “Sincere repentance is demonstrated when the same temptation to sin, under the same conditions, is resolutely resisted” (Talmud Yoma 86b). Note that according to traditional Jewish views, the atonement is of no avail without repentance (Midrash Sifra). [*shuv/strepho*]
2. **Regret the breach** in your relationship with God and others (Psalm 51). [*nacham/metanoia*]
3. **Confess the truth** and make amends with those we have harmed (Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9; James 5:16, Matt. 5:23-4). Note that we must ask for mechilah (forgiveness from others) before receiving selichah (forgiveness from God). [*shuv/strepho*]
4. **Accept your forgiveness** and move forward with the LORD through faith (Phil. 3:13-14; 1 John 1:9). Be comforted by the Presence of the LORD in your life: *Nachumu*: “Comfort ye my people” (Isa. 40:1). [*nacham/metanoia*].

Finally, it needs to be said that authentic repentance is a lifestyle, not a “one time deal.” We never get past it. Although there is certainly spiritual progress as we walk in grace, all genuine progress comes through ongoing teshuvah. We may repent from a certain action at a given point in time, but that does not mean that no longer need to do teshuvah. Teshuvah is perpetual and timeless, since it corresponds to our spiritual lives rather than our temporal lives. Indeed, a true penitent is called *baal teshuvah* (בַּעַל תְּשׁוּבָה), a “master of returning,” who is always turning away from self and toward God. We never get beyond the call to “repent and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). That is why the season of teshuvah is always timely. The message of Elul and the High Holidays is meant to be carried over throughout the rest of the year.

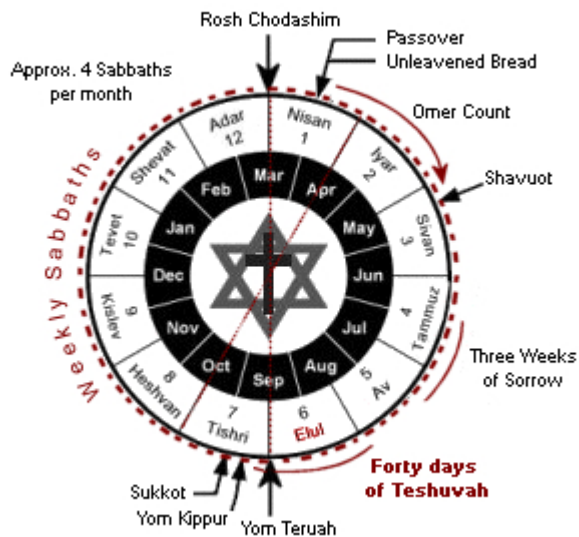
Confession (ὁμολογία) means bringing yourself naked before the Divine Light to agree with the truth about who you are. Indeed, the verb *homologeō* (ὁμολογέω) literally means “saying the same thing” - from ὁμός (same) and λόγος (word). In Modern Hebrew teshuvah means an “answer” to a *shelah*, or a question. God’s love for us is the question, and our teshuvah – our turning of the heart toward Him – is the answer. Teshuvah is one of the great gifts God gives each of us – the ability to turn back to Him and seek healing for our brokenness.

### Turning, Turning, Turning...

So how do we prepare for Rosh Hashanah? Traditionally we prepare through three types of turning: 1) turning to God (*tefillah*); 2) turning to others we’ve harmed or offended (*teshuvah*), and 3) turning to those in need (*tzedakah*). In all three cases we can genuinely return to God only by choosing to embrace the truth about our lives.



Our *tefillot* (prayers) are offered in the plural, emphasizing that we are all interconnected. This is the idea of *kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*: “All Israel is responsible for one another” (Talmud Shavuot 39a). We are all one “body” and should one member hurt, we all are diminished (1 Cor. 12:26). *Avinu Malkenu* - “Our Father, our King...” “Our Father in heaven, holy is Your Name,” as Yeshua taught us. Our *teshuvah* means that we honestly examine ourselves and repair any breach we might have created in our relationships (James 5:16). And our *tzedakah* means that we turn away from ourselves entirely, considering the the needs of others and their welfare instead of our own.



The month of Elul is the month set apart for repentance, or *teshuvah*, in spiritual preparation for the High Holidays (i.e., Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur). The “Season of Teshuvah” runs forty days from the first of Elul to Yom Kippur. Each day the shofar is sounded we appeal to the LORD for the gift of genuine repentance in our lives. The last ten days of this 40 day period (beginning on Rosh Hashanah and ending on Yom Kippur) are referred to as the “High Holy Days” or the “Days of Awe” (*Yamim Nora'im*).

Some of the sages say that the sin of refusing to do *teshuvah* is worse than the actual sin itself, since the sin was committed at a time when you were overcome by your evil inclination, but now you can look back dispassionately over your actions in confession and remorse (Psalm 32:5; James 5:16; 2 Cor. 13:5). *Teshuvah* means “answering” to God regarding the truth of your condition. If we genuinely return to the love of our Heavenly Father, we will hate our sins because they were acts of *treason* against His love.

How many “Rosh Hashanahs” will there be in your life? How many opportunities for you to return to the LORD? The Talmud says, “Repent one day before you die.” But who knows the day of one’s death in advance? Therefore live each day as if it were to be your last, and “seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.”