



BETH CHAYIM CHADASHIM
AN INTERNET RESOURCE GUIDE FOR THE HIGH HOLY DAYS
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ELUL: THE MONTH OF SPIRITUAL PREPERATION

What is Elul and Its Customs?

Elul is the spiritual month that precedes the High Holy Days. It is a time of repentance in preparation for the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Tradition teaches that the month of Elul is a particularly propitious time for repentance. This mood of repentance builds through the month of Elul to the period of Selichot, to Rosh Hashanah, and finally to Yom Kippur. More...

<http://www.jewfaq.org/elul.htm>

How to Get Spiritually Fit for the High Holy Days

If one has prepared physically for a race, the race experience is more likely to be positive. And if one has prepared spiritually for the Jewish Days of Judgment and Atonement, the High Holy Days experience is more likely to be positive too. More...

http://judaism.about.com/od/elul/qt/elul_ideas.htm

Some Questions to Ask Yourself before the High Holy Days

1. Who have you disappointed, and how?
2. Where have there been gaps between your words and your deeds?
3. When have you negatively disrupted peace and harmony among people – family, friends, community members, strangers, society? More...

www.ncjh.org/downloads/TshvuahTriggerQuestions.doc

Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur: Creating a Spiritual Plan

Creating a strategic plan involves two basic stages. First we "brainstorm" a solution to a problem; and secondly we identify the action steps required in order to achieve the plan. During the brainstorming we're open-minded; we expand our sense of possibilities. During the action stage we focus on the concrete details and how to achieve our goal. The problem we seek to solve on Rosh Hashanah is the lack of spirituality in our lives; and on Yom Kippur we begin to change the attitudes and behaviors that caused that lack. On Rosh Hashanah we get inspired with the idea of why we're alive altogether; and on Yom Kippur we begin to remove the impediments that prevent us from having the life we desire. More...

<http://www.morim-madrichim.org/en/Content/AR/2165/rosh-hashanah-and-yom-kippur-creating-a-spiritual-strategic-plan?firstreg=1>

SELICHOT: A SHIFT IN TIME

Selichot marks the beginning of the High Holy Day cycle. Also, known as the The Prayers of Repentance service, in the Ashkenazi tradition it usually begins on the Saturday night before Rosh HaShanah. In the Sephardic tradition, Selichot begins on the second day of Elul and continues throughout the month.

It's the first time we recite the *Al Cheyt* penitential prayer, the set of lines that starts "for the sin which we've committed before you by _____ and for the sin which we've committed before you by _____."

Also, the repeated recitation of The Thirteen Attributes of God is a fundamental part of the Selichot service. More...

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Rosh_Hashanah/High_Holidays/Selichot.shtml?p=2

ROSH HASHANAH: A TIME OF RENEWAL

How Much Do You Know About Rosh HaShanah?

Test yourself with this fun and short quiz from myjewishlearning.com

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/quiz/index.php?tid=HY.JH.RH>

What Is Rosh HaShanah?

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, is a fall holiday, taking place at the beginning of the month of Tishrei, which is actually the seventh month of the Jewish year (counting from Nisan in the spring). It is both a time of rejoicing and of serious introspection, a time to celebrate the completion of another year while also taking stock of one's life.

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Rosh_Hashanah/Rosh_Hashanah_101.shtml?p=1

What is Hatarat Nedarim: The Release of Vows?

Almost everyone who is Jewish knows that Kol Nidre is about releasing vows and has participated in the ceremony. Few know the parallel ritual done in small groups before Rosh Hashanah. Traditionally, right before Rosh Hashanah one performs this simple ritual with three friends, each in turn becoming the petitioner, while the other three act as the beit din, the judges in a court. The ritual is a wonderful way to enter the holidays as well as to prepare oneself for what will happen on Yom Kippur. More...

<http://opensiddur.org/2012/09/hatarat-nedarim-the-release-of-vows-by-reb-zalman-schachter-shalomi/>

What is Tashlich?

Tashlich (תשל"י) is a ritual that many Jews observe during Rosh HaShanah. "Tashlich" means "casting off" in Hebrew and involves symbolically casting off the sins of the previous year by tossing pieces of bread or another food into a body of flowing water. More...

<http://judaism.about.com/od/holidays/a/whatistashlich.htm>

At the Water's Edge: A Reading for Tashlich

On this sacred day
when the old year slips away
and we prepare to meet the year ahead,
we stand at the water's edge
our pockets lined with dust and bread,
symbols of our shortcomings and regrets.

Many are the regrets and sorrows
that weigh upon our souls,
let us cast them off into the moving waters
so we may begin anew.

Great is our regret
for the harsh words spoken,
the tender words left unsaid,
for the anger that smoldered,
the compassion withheld,
for our greed and jealousy,
our lack of generosity.
for all that we could have done,
all that we have left undone.

Many are the regrets and sorrows
that weigh upon our souls,
let us cast them into the moving waters
so we can strive to become
all that we were meant to be.

Great is our remorse
for the energy we spent fighting
instead of trying to make amends,
for the times we could have lent a hand
but kept our hands at our sides,
for the times we looked away from those near and far
who need our help and caring,
when we turned away from the places in the world
in need of repairing.

Many are the regrets and sorrows
that weigh upon our souls
Let us cast them into the moving waters
so we can begin to build bridges
connecting us one to another.

YOM KIPPUR: THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

How Much Do You Know About Yom Kippur?

Test yourself with this fun and short quiz from myjewishlearning.com

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/quiz/?tid=HY.JH.YK>

What is Yom Kippur?

Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) is one of two Jewish High Holy Days. The first High Holy Day is Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year). Yom Kippur falls ten days after Rosh Hashanah on the 10th of Tishrei, which is a Hebrew month that correlates with September-October on the secular calendar. The purpose of Yom Kippur is to bring about reconciliation between people and between individuals and God. According to Jewish tradition, it is also the day when God decides the fate of each human being. More...

<http://judaism.about.com/od/holidays/a/yomkippur.htm>

What is Kol Nidre?

For many Jews, the essence of the Yom Kippur service takes place at the very beginning of the holiday, at the evening service that ushers in Yom Kippur. It is called Kol Nidre, the name derived from the first major piece of the Yom Kippur prayers, dramatically chanted at the evening service. All the Torahs are taken out, the entire congregation stands, and the cantor chants this formula three times. While most people think that Kol Nidre is a prayer, it is actually a legal formula. More...

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Yom_Kippur/In_the_Community/Prayer_Services/Kol_Nidrei.shtml

The Curious Case of Kol Nidre: Its Paradoxical and Controversial History

In our time, the best-known ritual of the High Holy Day services—not only among Jews but among Christians as well—is unquestionably Kol Nidre. Highlighted by its strategic location at the very inauguration of the 24-hour fast of Atonement, and chanted in a traditional melody of great spiritual force, Kol Nidre exerts an enormous impact. Yet few of the millions who experience that impact every year are aware of the paradoxical and controversial history of the Kol Nidre rite. More...

<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/the-curious-case-of-kol-nidre/>

Should You Fast? If so, How Should You?

Best Ways to Prepare for the Yom Kippur (or any) Fast

In Judaism, fasting is thought to have a significant spiritual benefit. It helps us focus on our mortality and the value of life, while freeing us of physical concerns for one day so we can focus on our spiritual wellbeing. However, the severe side effects of fasting can detract from the spiritual experience if they are too severe (or in the worst case scenario threaten our health). While discomfort, hunger pains, thirst and weakness are an expected side effect of the Yom Kippur fast, one need not dehydrate, faint or get sick while fasting. There are several ways to prepare yourself physically for a healthy fast. More...

<http://judaism.about.com/od/holidays/a/Best-Ways-To-Prepare-For-Yom-Kippur-Fast.htm>

Why Do We Wear White, Avoid Leather Wear, and Wear a Tallit on Kol Nidre?

Three Yom Kippur Customs Explained

Some say that we wear white on Yom Kippur to be like the angels. We yearn to ascend, to be lighter, more clear and transparent. More...

There is a custom on this day of avoiding wearing anything made of leather, because leather requires the death of a living creature. More...

Kol Nidre evening is one of the very few times in the Jewish year when a tallit is worn at night. More...

<http://blogs.rj.org/blog/2012/09/25/three-yom-kippur-customs-explained/>

SYNAGOGUE PRAYER: CREATING A SPIRITUAL SPACE

Making Synagogue Meaningful: Or, How to Survive High Holy Day Services

"... but Rabbi, even if I can read some of the prayers I still don't understand what I'm saying... To tell you the truth I'd rather take a quiet reflective walk in the park this year than spend all that time in synagogue saying a bunch of words that don't really mean so much to me anyway..."

Prayer is meant to be a powerful, relevant and meaningful experience. Here are a few ideas to keep in mind this year that should help to make the services as personally uplifting as possible.

1) Five minutes of prayer said with understanding, feeling, and a personal connection to the words and their significance means far more than five hours of lip service. More... http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Rosh_Hashanah/In_the_Community/Services/Surviving_Services.shtml

A Survival Guide to the Rosh HaShanah Morning Service

Do you find yourself frequently sneaking a peek at your neighbor's prayer book to figure out what page number everyone's on? And, do you chuckle when you see your neighbor sneaking a peek at yours? This might help you (and your neighbor), an outline for the Rosh HaShanah morning service...

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/RoshHashanahMorningServices.html>

A Survival Guide to the Yom Kippur Prayer Services

The Day of Atonement contains more services than any other observance in Judaism. Here's an overview of them...

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Yom_Kippur/In_the_Community/Prayer_Services.shtml