

## Preparing for the High Holy Days (Fall Feasts)

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### Yom Zikaron Tru'ah



**“Blessed is the nation that knows Tru’ah.”** (Psalms 89:15)

The month of **Elul is the sixth** month of the Hebrew biblical calendar, and is the month which precedes the time of the Fall Feasts of the Lord: Feast of Trumpets (Yom Zikaron Tru’ah), Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) and Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot). These three of God’s appointed times all occur in the seventh month of Tishrei.

Each morning of Elul, the shofar (or trumpet) is sounded - it’s piercing, haunting sound stirring our hearts to seek God and repent of the sin in our lives. The sound of the shofar is like our souls crying out to the Righteous Judge for grace and mercy.

When we hear the shofar we may focus on the **thirteen attributes of mercy** revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai: “The LORD, The LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness and truth; who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.” (Exodus 34:6-7)

A well-known and greatly respected Jewish sage of the Middle Ages, Maimonides, wrote that the sound of the shofar is like an **alarm call** as if to tell us:

**“Sleepers, arise from your slumber,** and those who are dozing, awake from your lethargy. Review your actions, repent from your sins, and remember your Creator!”

In the New Testament we are also exhorted to WAKE UP out of our spiritual slumber and make the most of our time, not following vanity or frivolous pursuits but loving and following God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

**"Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Messiah will shine on you. Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,<sup>16</sup> making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."** (Ephesians 5:14-16)

We need to truly wake up out of our spiritual slumbers and work while there is still light, for our redemption draws near. *“And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.”* (Romans 13:11)

### Slichot confessions

During this time, special psalms are read and prayers recited called Slichot (forgiveness). The Hebrew word ‘slichah’ means ‘I’m sorry’ or ‘forgive me’. Although we strive to live a pure and holy life before God, all of us sin and fall short of the glory of God, therefore we need to repent.

“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.” (Lamentations 3:40)

For the many errors we make that hurt ourselves and others, we need to repent and ask forgiveness. Part of this confession list is presented here: “Lord I repent and ask forgiveness...

For the sin that we have sinned before You through hardness of heart.

For the sin that we have sinned before You with utterance of lips.

For the sin that we have sinned before You through immorality.

For the sin that we have sinned before You through harsh speech.

For the sin that we have sinned before You through inner thoughts.

For the sin that we have sinned before You through insincere confession.

For the sin that we have sinned before You through foolish speech.

For the sin that we have sinned before You through impure lips.

For the sin that we have sinned before You through denial and false promises.

For the sin that we have sinned before You through scorning.

For the sin that we have sinned before You with food and drink.

For the sin that we have sinned before You through gossip.

For the sin that we have sinned before You in commercial dealings.

**For all these, O God of forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant atonement through Messiah Yeshua.**

During this month of Elul, may we each be challenged to take a look deep within us, asking the Holy Spirit to shine His light on any areas of sin in our lives, or hidden in our hearts with which we need to deal.

As the Psalmist David composed:

**“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”**

(Psalm 139:23-2)

## The Moadim of Adonai

During the entire month of Elul, we are to be preparing ourselves - spiritually, emotionally, and physically - to meet with God.

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, **“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The feasts of the LORD מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts מוֹעֲדַי.”** (Leviticus 23:1)

God has established, from the beginning of time, special ‘divine appointments’ when He has chosen to meet with His people for specific purposes. These ‘God appointed times’ are called in Hebrew ‘mo’adim’ מוֹעֲדִים .

In the book of Leviticus, God specified what each of these ‘moadim’ are for, how we are to celebrate them, and when they are to be kept. Much of the world (including mainstream Christianity) consider these to be “Jewish holidays” and therefore not relevant to them; but this is far from the truth.

These special feasts and festivals were in fact created and instituted by God, first for the Jew and then also for the Gentile who would join the commonwealth of Israel through the Jewish Messiah, Yeshua. God said, **“These are MY MO’ADIM...”** (Leviticus 23:2)

God’s appointed times are basically grouped into those that occur in the fall, and the spring ones - each of which have their own special significance and prophetic meaning. They all reveal something amazing that Yeshua the Messiah has done or will do in the future.

Soon we will be entering the very special and holy time of the fall moadim: **Yom Zikaron Tru'ah** – (Feast of Shouting or Trumpets), Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) and Feast of Tabernacles/booths (Sukkot).

“Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a Sabbath rest, a memorial of **shouting or blowing of trumpets (tru'ah)**, a holy convocation.” (Leviticus 23:23-24)

The day begins on the eve before with the blowing of the shofar, special prayers and synagogue services. This day is then followed by a set apart time of ten days called the **Ten Days of Awe (Yamim Noraim)** and then **Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)**.

This is an intense time of introspection and self examination, to look at the condition of our lives and get right with God. Interestingly, the very name **Yisrael** **ישראל** (Israel) can be taken to mean ‘*right with God*’, from two Hebrew words: **Yashar** (straight, right, or honest) and **El** God. { **ישראל** }



A man in a [tallit](#) blows the [shofar](#)

## Forgive us our Sins

Since forgiveness is a major theme of the fall feasts, we seek to forgive and to make amends with all people. We can ask the Holy Spirit to bring to our remembrance anyone with whom we need to express forgiveness or make some kind of restitution during the month of Elul.

We need to both request forgiveness of those we have sinned against and to extend it towards those who have sinned against us, as is written in ‘The Lord’s Prayer: Of course we are to walk in continual forgiveness towards all people every day of the year; but knowing our human nature, God has given us this special time to focus on repentance and forgiveness.

Considering that Yeshua said that unforgiveness towards others would keep us from receiving the forgiveness of our Heavenly Father this is a crucial issue.

**“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”**  
(Matthew 6:14-15)

Peace in our human relationships is so important that in the New Testament, it says that when we stand praying, if we remember someone who has anything against us, we should leave our gift at the altar and go be reconciled with that person.

**“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)**

As we hear the sound of the shofar being blown throughout the month of Elul may it remind us to be prepared for that great day of the Lord which is to come when the shofar will sound and Yeshua the Messiah will come back to earth. And when He returns may He find His Bride ready.

Come Adonai Yeshua....

May your experience of the Fall Feasts be meaningful and joyous; and may you be blessed with a wonderful year of goodness and mercy.



Shofar (by Alphonse Lévy)

Caption says: "To a good year