

Elul: Our Chance For Liberation

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A Sacred Time – Elul #1

Our sages tell us that Elul are *yemei ratzon*, days when it is easier to find favor in G-d's eyes. Rebbe Nachman explains that the forty days during which Moshe ascended on high to receive the second set of the tablets began on the first day of Elul and ended on Yom Kippur. It was during this period of time that G-d was appeased after the sin of the Golden Calf that had precipitated the shattering of the first set of tablets. This makes it the perfect time to focus on repairing our relationship with G-d by clearing away the wreckage of our past.

This opportunity brings a new kind of accountability in its wake. Imagine someone trapped in a cruel prison. We all know that a prisoner will grab at any opportunity to escape. Elul is our chance for freedom; why don't we jump to liberate ourselves from the dead weight of our old selves?

Reb Nosson, z"l, explains that these days are called days of desire because it is the time when we dig deep within and awaken our soul's desire for G-d. We all long for spiritual closeness and accomplishment. The *shofar*, ram's horn, blown after the morning prayers during this month, prepares us for Rosh Hashanah. Its siren calls us to awaken from our deep spiritual slumber.

Dear G-d. Help me take advantage of these special days by yearning for closeness to You, and by doing whatever I can to draw nearer to You. Help me to finally break free!