

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road

Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



September 3, 2022

Shoftim

7 Elul, 5782

A Month of Acronyms

There's something special about the current Jewish month of Elul. Of course, we could say there's something special about every Jewish month! But Elul in particular, as the last month of the outgoing year and preparation for the new year, is quite unique.

There's something else special about Elul, though. It has more acronyms associated with it than any other month, probably even more than the most beloved and observed Jewish holidays! (Do you know any acronyms for Chanukah or Passover?)

Elul has five acronyms.

The four Hebrew letters that spell "Elul" are aleph, lamed, vov, lamed. Each stands for the first letter in a verse, like this: "ani ledodi v'dodi li" (Song of Songs 6:3). That means, in English, "I am for my beloved and my beloved is for me." Our Sages explain that this verse refers to our relationship with G-d, which we establish through prayer.

Perhaps you've heard of the "three pillars": the world stands on three pillars, prayer, Torah study and acts of loving kindness (Ethics, chapter 1).

And, you guessed it, there's an Elul acronym for the other two pillars, as well. We thought you'd never ask:

Acts of loving kindness, or charity: "ish lerei'eihu v'matanot la'evyonim" (Esther 9:22), or, "A person to his fellow and gifts to the poor." (Oh, yeah, the word "ish," man, begins with an aleph, the silent letter.)

Torah study: "inah le'yado vesamti lach" (Ex. 21:13), or "... caused it to happen, I will appoint for you." The verse is talking about establishing a "city of refuge," and Torah study, our Sages teach, is a spiritual "city of refuge."

The other two refer to acts that do more than sustain the world; they refer to acts that elevate it to a higher level of spirituality.

Acronym number four comes from Deut. 30:6: "et levavcha ve'et levav" (Yes, the word "et" begins with an aleph, which is why in English it begins with a vowel). This means "your heart and the heart [of your children]." G-d will metaphorically circumcise the heart - remove the obstructions to an open heart, a reference to teshuva, which is a change of heart. Teshuvah elevates the individual. And individual teshuva, gathered together, leads to the fifth acronym.

For, finally, there's this passage: "l'hashem v'yomru leimor ashira" (Ex 15:1), which means, "to G-d, and they said, saying, I will sing." Now, if you'll look at that transliteration, you'll notice that this acronym is in reverse: it goes lamed, vov, lamed, aleph, or lule. This verse comes from the Song of the Sea, which celebrates Redemption, both the Redemption from Egypt and the future Redemption with Moshiach. Redemption - the theme of the fifth acronym.

Why is the acronym in reverse? Being so, it's hidden, just as the future Redemption is, momentarily, hidden.

And now we ask, why does Elul generate five acronyms, subtle indications of how we approach our relationship with and service to G d, and the results therefrom? Because Elul is the month of preparation. During Elul we habituate ourselves to these five, the three pillars of the world and the two elevations, individual and global. And in so doing, we prepare ourselves for Rosh Hashanah, the day when the shofar blowing counts, an echo of the Great Shofar that will usher in the era of Redemption.

(from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

"The voice of your lookouts, they have raised a voice, together shall they sing glad song, for every eye shall see when Hashem returns to Zion." (From the Haftarah—Yeshayah 52:8)

The Gemara (Berachot 12b) teaches that the Exodus must be remembered every day and that, even after Mashiach has come, we still will remember the Exodus. R' Yitzchak Isaac Chaver z"l (1789-1852; rabbi of Suvalk, Lithuania) explains: The Exodus is the foundation of our Emunah, for it was then that the Chosen Nation was imbued with the spiritual attributes that are passed down from generation to generation. Even in times of exile, some "impression" from that influence can be seen.

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In particular, at the time of the Exodus we became a nation with which Hashem interacts directly, outside of the laws of nature. This relationship is, for the most part, hidden now, but, at the time of the future redemption, it will be obvious; "for every eye shall see when Hashem returns to Zion." (Haggadah Shel Pesach Yad Mitzrayim: Potei'ach Yad)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

Sponsorships are available for two flower displays on the Bima during each of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succot. Please consider sponsoring the flowers in honor or in memory of someone. Please email Allan Genut at agenut@gmail.com to make arrangements.



"The Book of Jewish Knowledge" edited by Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan is now available to order online at myjli.com/catalog/product/bojk/

Dedication of plaques on the Shul board which is prominently located in the hall at the entrance to the Shul is an appropriate means of Tzedakah and supports the Shul as well. Below is the list of items available. Please contact Howard Kaplon at hkaplon@towson.edu for more information.

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|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Top (large) Plaques \$5,400 | 2. Medium Plaques \$3,600 |
| 3. Small Plaques \$1,000 | 4. Simcha Leaf \$250 |

Yahrzeit Plaques on the Shul's Memorial board are available. Each yahrzeit plaque is \$360.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to **Shoshana Zakar** on the loss of her mother.

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

SHUL DIRECTORY

Rabbi: Shmuel Kaplan . . . rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com
Treasurer: Michael Frank . . . shul.chabad@gmail.com
Kiddush: Reuven Frank rfrank82@gmail.com
Website: Shoshana Zakar sue.zakar@gmail.com

Gabbaim:
 Yehudah Buchwalter . . . judahbuchwalter@verizon.net
 Allan Genut agenut@gmail.com
 Ephraim Siff
Bulletin: Howard Kaplon hkaplon@towson.edu

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 9/2 — 6 Elul
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 9/3 — 7 Elul
 Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
 Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:49 a.m.
 Minchah — 7:05 p.m.
 Shiur: *Overcoming Folly* — after Minchah
 Ma'ariv — 8:17 p.m.

Sunday, 9/4 — 8 Elul
 Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.

Monday — Labor Day, 9/5 — 9 Elul
 Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.

Tuesday, 9/6 — 10 Elul
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.

Wednesday, 9/7 — 11 Elul
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.

Thursday, 9/8 — 12 Elul
 Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.

Friday, 9/9 — 13 Elul
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Shabbat Candles — 7:06 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.