

I Will Hide My Face — And See What Their End Will Be

Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren · 9 September 2026

27 Elul 5786 · 9 September 2026 · Haazinu, 4th

Daily Learning Portions for 27 Elul 5786 — Elul Expansion

Wednesday, 9 September 2026 · כ"ז אלול תשפ"ו · Haazinu, 4th

Day 27 of Elul · tenth of the twelve monthly-cheshbon days (today = Tammuz of the year now closing)

2 days to Erev Rosh Hashanah 5787 (Friday, 11 September 2026) · 3 days to Rosh Hashanah (Shabbat, 12 September 2026)

Ashkenaz Selichot: weekday mornings in force · daily shofar · extra Tehillim

On this date: third day of Creation — dry land appears; vegetation according to its kind (Bereishit 1:9–13)

Today's Daily Learning Portions

Cycle	Portion
Chumash	Parshat Haazinu, 4th aliyah — Devarim 32:19–32:28
Tehillim	Chapters 120–134 (Elul extra chapters: 79–81 per Hayom Yom / Baal Shem Tov custom)
Tanya	Iggeret HaKodesh, beginning of Epistle 18
Rambam (3 ch.)	Hilchot She'ar Avot HaTum'ah 6–8
Sefer HaMitzvot	Daily cycle Day 219 — P97 (impurity of sheratzim)
Hayom Yom	Elul 27 — “Israel, one nation on the earth”: even in this world bound to the One; God makes spirit into matter; Israel makes matter into spirit
Seasonal overlay	Weekday Selichot; daily shofar; tefillin and mezuzot; extra Tehillim; increased tzedakah and Ahavat Yisrael; two days to Erev Rosh Hashanah

Seasonal frame. Yesterday the song named the table and the kick: honey from a rock, then Yeshurun fat, then forgotten birth. Today the same song records the response from Heaven. The Lord saw. He was provoked by sons and daughters. He said: I will hide My face from them. I will see what their end will be.

Hester panim is not a mood of the last days of Elul. It is a named clause in the court-record of Haazinu. The Field does not cancel the clause. The Field is the season in which a hidden Face can still be approached before the year is sealed. Two days remain before Erev Rosh Hashanah. The King is still in the Field. The song is already teaching what the Field is for.

I. The Fourth Aliyah: Hidden Face, Spent Arrows, a Name That Will Not Be Erased

“And the Lord saw this and became angry, provoked by His sons and daughters.” (Devarim 32:19)

Rashi on the preceding verses has already mapped the provocation: strange gods, abominations, demons that are not god, new ones that came of late. Verse 19 does not introduce a new crime. It records that the crime was seen. The song will not allow a theology in which Heaven does not look. Anger here is not caprice. It is the grief of parentage: sons and daughters. The people who kicked the table are still named as children.

“And He said, ‘I will hide My face from them. I will see what their end will be, for they are a generation of changes; they are not recognizable as My children whom I have reared.’” (32:20)

Rashi: I will conceal My Presence. I will see what befalls them in the end. A generation of changes — they turn My goodwill into anger. Emun is rearing, as Mordechai reared Hadassah; alternatively, faithfulness. Targum: children in whom there is no faithfulness. At Sinai they said na’aseh ve-nishma; a short while later they made the calf.

Three claims sit in one verse, and Elul needs all three.

First: hiding the Face is a decision, not an accident of history. Haster astir later in the song (31:18) and astirah panai here are policy of covenant, not cosmic weather.

Second: hiding is not blindness. “I will see what their end will be.” The Face withdraws from companionship; the Eye does not withdraw from the end. A generation that treats silence as absence has misread the verse.

Third: the children are not recognizable as the ones who were reared. The wound is not only disobedience. It is unrecognizability. The training does not show. Sinai’s sentence is no longer readable on the face of the people who said it.

Elul cheshbon that only lists sins has not yet reached 32:20. The harder question is: would a father who reared you still recognize the stance? Would na’aseh ve-nishma still be visible in the year’s speech?

“They have provoked My jealousy with a non-god, provoked My anger with their vanities. Thus I will provoke their jealousy with a non-people, provoke their anger with a foolish nation.” (32:21)

Rashi: a thing that is not a god. A nation that has no name — Chaldeans of whom Isaiah said “this people was not”; Esau of whom Obadiah said “you are very despised.” The foolish nation: heretics; “the fool said in his heart, there is no God.”

Measure for measure is exact. A non-god is answered with a non-people. Vanity is answered with a nation that cannot be asked for a reason. The civic sting of the verse is not imported. It is the grammar of the song. A people that gives its jealousy to what has no being will be made jealous by what has no name. Identity that will not bind itself to the One becomes porous to whatever crowd arrives next.

“For a fire blazed in My wrath, and burned to the lowest depths. It consumed the land and its produce, setting aflame the foundations of mountains.” (32:22)

Rashi: burned within you to the foundation. Your land and its produce. The mountains: Jerusalem, “Jerusalem is surrounded by mountains.” The fire is not only metaphor for feeling. It reaches soil, harvest, and the city’s foundations. Yesterday’s high places are today’s kindling if the gift is kicked.

“I will link evils upon them. I will use up My arrows on them.” (32:23)

Rashi hears two senses of aspeh: I will join evil to evil; or I will consume. Then the turn that Elul must not skip: “I will finish all My arrows on them.” In the ordinary grammar of curse this is ruin. In the inner grammar Rashi records from the Sifrei it is a blessing hidden inside the sentence: My arrows may come to an end; Israel will not come to an end.

Two days from Erev Rosh Hashanah this is the verse to carry into Selichot. The song is willing to speak famine, demons, sword, and terror. It is not willing to speak annihilation as the last word. Spent arrows are a limit placed on wrath by the same Mouth that hides the Face. Limited power under higher law is not only a republican slogan. It is Rashi on 32:23.

“They will sprout hair from famine, attacked by demons, excised by Meriri. I will incite the teeth of livestock upon them, with the venom of creatures that slither in the dust. From outside, the sword will bereave, and terror from within; young men and maidens, suckling babes with venerable elders.” (32:24–25)

Rashi: emaciation that grows hair; demons; a named spirit of excision; sheep that once bit men to death; venom of what crawls the dust. Outside: the sword of troops. Within: the inner rooms of the heart pounding until a man dies of terror; or plague in the house; or — another line — sword for what was done in the streets, terror for what was done in the chambers.

The last reading is Elul’s most precise. Public square and private room are both on the record. A cheshbon that only audits the street will miss the chamber. A cheshbon that only audits the chamber will miss the altar that was set in the open. Young and old are named together so that no age-class can claim exemption. The song is a family document.

“I said that I would make an end of them, eradicate their remembrance from mankind. Were it not that the enemy’s wrath was heaped up, lest their adversaries distort; lest they claim, ‘Our hand was triumphant! The Lord did none of this!’ For they are a nation devoid of counsel, and they have no understanding.” (32:26–28)

The most severe sentence in the aliyah is the one God refuses to finish. I said I would erase the name. I did not, because the enemy would take the credit. “Our hand did this; the Lord did none of this.”

Two theologies are forbidden in the same breath. Israel may not read history as if the Hand were absent. The nations may not read Israel’s wounds as if their own hand were the author. The Name remains the Author even when the Face is hidden. A republic of the covenant that explains its survival as technique has already joined the enemy’s sentence. A despair that explains collapse as proof that there is no Author has joined it from the other side.

“A nation devoid of counsel, and they have no understanding.” Rashi’s horizon here is the adversary; the plain sense can also fall on a generation of changes that no longer recognizes its own rearing. Late Elul does not flinch from either address. Counsel is not sophistication. Counsel is the capacity to read a hidden Face without concluding that the end is ownerless.

Readings that must be kept distinct.

Peshat: seen provocation; hidden Face that still watches the end; measure-for-measure with a non-people; fire to the foundations; arrows spent; sword outside and terror inside; a name not erased lest the enemy claim the hand. Rashi / Sifrei: concealment of Presence, not of sight; unrecognizable children after Sinai's vow; heretics as the foolish nation; Jerusalem's mountains; arrows that end before the people ends; chambers as heart, house, and secret sin. Mussar: unrecognizability is a deeper wound than a list of acts; public and private are both liable; despair and self-congratulation are twin misreadings of hester. Chassidic: the King in the Field is the mercy-form of the same King who can hide a Face; ahavah betaanugim may be withheld; thirsting love is still work that can be done; matter is not the hiding — matter is what Israel was given to turn. Civic-covenantal: hidden sovereignty is not lawlessness; spent arrows are a limit on wrath; "our hand did this" is the theology of domination; a people without counsel cannot consent because it can no longer read the Author of its end.

II. Tehillim 120–134 and Extra Chapters 79–81

The monthly Tehillim for the 27th is the fifteen Songs of Ascents.

A song of ascents. In my distress I called. I lift my eyes to the mountains — whence comes my help; my help is from the Lord, Maker of heaven and earth. If the Lord does not build the house, its builders labor in vain. Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which will not be moved. When the Lord returned the captivity of Zion, we were like dreamers. Unless the Lord watches the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is vain for you who rise early and sit late, who eat the bread of misery; He gives sleep to His beloved. Children are an inheritance. How good and how pleasant is brothers dwelling together. Behold, bless the Lord, all servants of the Lord, who stand in the house of the Lord in the nights.

The fourth aliyah hides a Face and spends arrows. The Songs of Ascents refuse to treat the road up as ownerless. Help has a source. The house has a Builder. The city has a Watchman. Zion does not move because Someone is under it. Night-standing in the house is still called service. Two days from Erev Rosh Hashanah the fifteen steps are not atmosphere. They are the opposite motion of 32:20: if the Face is hidden, the eyes still lift.

The extra Elul chapters today are 79–81. Asaph: God, nations have come into Your inheritance; they have defiled the Sanctuary; they have made Jerusalem heaps. How long, O Lord — will You be angry forever? We have become a taunt. Then 80: Shepherd of Israel, shine forth; restore us; cause Your Face to shine and we will be saved. Then 81: sing to God our strength; I am the Lord your God who brought you up from Egypt; open your mouth and I will fill it. Israel would not listen; so He gave them over to their own counsel.

Psalm 80 asks for the shining of the Face on the morning the Chumash records its hiding. Psalm 81 names the same gift-then-kick sequence the third aliyah sang yesterday, and then the consequence: they walked in their own counsels. Today's 32:28 — a nation devoid of counsel — is 81 heard from the other side. Selichot that recite these chapters without noticing the conversation are only making noise before dawn.

III. Tanya: Beginning of Epistle 18 — Two Loves

Iggeret HaKodesh 18 opens from the verse, “How beautiful and how pleasant are you, ahavah betaanugim.”

The Alter Rebbe distinguishes two loves, each of which subdivides.

The first is ahavah betaanugim — a love that tastes delight. The soul wonders at a sweetness that is not the product of its own comprehension. It is a foretaste of the World to Come, where the righteous sit with crowns and take delight in the radiance of the Presence. “Rejoice, you righteous, in the Lord.” Not everyone merits it. The Zohar’s phrase is kahana bire’uta deliba — the Kohen serving with the innermost desire of the heart, silently, unlike the Levite whose longing breaks into song. Of this love it is said that priestly service is given as a gift.

The second love — developed as the epistle continues beyond today’s reading — is thirst and longing: a love that can be built by meditation and work.

The sons of the Alter Rebbe placed this letter after Epistle 17 for a reason the commentators mark. Yesterday: the commandment is very wide; tzedakah as vessel; yearning in Gan Eden has an end; the deed in this world does not. Today: even so, some revelation of attachment can surface in the soul as felt love. The nucleus of a mitzvah is tzavta, attachment, present in the doing whether or not the doer tastes it. Ahavah betaanugim is a gift that resembles Resurrection’s delight. Thirsting love is a revelation that resembles Gan Eden. A Jew who performs a mitzvah may receive some echo of both. He must not wait for the gift-love before he acts. Better one hour of teshuvah and good deeds in this world than all the World to Come — because the hour is attachment now, not a later tasting of what the hour produced.

Elul 27, under a verse that hides a Face, needs this distinction kept clean.

Do not demand ahavah betaanugim as the entrance ticket to the last seventy-two hours. That love is a gift. Many honest years do not receive it on schedule. Do not treat the absence of delight as proof of hester in the sense of abandonment. The Face may hide companionship and still command work. Thirst is the available register. Longing that can be built is the Field’s ordinary coin. Open the mouth — Psalm 81 — and the filling is not owed as sensation on demand.

A generation of changes becomes unrecognizable when it will only serve a Face it already feels. The children who were reared were taught to serve also when the taste is withheld.

IV. Rambam and Sefer HaMitzvot: Idols, Chains of Contact, Busy Hands

Three chapters: She’ar Avot HaTum’ah 6–8. Sefer HaMitzvot P97: we are commanded concerning the ritual impurity of the sheratzim listed in the Torah.

Chapter 6 treats the impurity of false deities and what belongs to them. The impurity of an idol, its accessories, its offerings and libations is Rabbinic in origin, and then the law specifies measures, touch, carrying, and entry into inner space. An idol the size of an olive defiles by touch and by the airspace of earthenware; it does not defile by carrying. Accessories follow the pattern of crawling-animal carcasses. Offerings and poured wine follow the pattern of neveilah.

Gentile ordinary wine is a lesser decree. The technical patience of the chapter is itself a teaching. A non-god in Haazinu is not only a lyric insult. It generates a legal field. What is not God still leaves a residue that law knows how to name, limit, and wash.

Chapter 7 is the chain of foods, liquids, and vessels: what the Torah itself defiles, what the Sages added, how liquids remain primary derivatives even down a long chain, how the outer surface of a vessel and the inner space do not always share a fate, how sacrifices are stricter than terumah. Contact is not a vague atmosphere. It is graded.

Chapter 8 is the impurity of hands. Hands that touch a primary derivative become impure to the joint — a Rabbinic decree. Hands are always secondary. Solomon and his court decreed it even for the unknown case, because “hands are busy.” Originally for sacrifices, then extended to terumah. Wash, or wrap, or the food is judged accordingly. Impure hands make liquids primary and foods secondary. Eating impure foods makes the eater secondary until immersion. A pregnant woman who must eat less than the measure is not made to immerse for that act. A nursing woman who is herself a primary derivative does not defile the infant.

P97 keeps sheratzim in view: the eight crawling things whose carcasses the Torah itself made fathers of impurity. Yesterday the cycle studied the bird that defiles in the gullet and the carcass of an animal. Today the crawl on the dust — the same dust the song names in 32:24 as the track of venom.

The Elul overlay is not an allegory pasted on halachah. It is the same subject in two registers.

A non-god leaves residue. Chapter 6 will not let idolatry be “only an idea.” Chains of contact are real. What touches what, and through which liquid, matters. Late-year cheshbon that treats influence as fog will never know what to wash. Hands are busy. Solomon did not wait for proof of each contact. The decree assumes a world in which the hand moves faster than the mind’s inventory. Two days from Erev Rosh Hashanah, wash the hands you know about. Do not claim purity on the grounds that you did not watch them all year. Mercy is already inside the decree: the pregnant woman’s measure; the infant not defiled by the mother’s status; Temple space that does not receive the hand-impurity contracted outside. Law that can hide a Face can still cut a limit around the vulnerable.

V. Hayom Yom Elul 27: One Nation on the Earth

From the holy teachings of the Alter Rebbe: “Israel, one nation on the earth.” The nation of Israel, even in the earthly world, is bound up with the one God. God transforms the spiritual into something material; Israel transforms the material into something spiritual.

The verse is Divrei HaYamim I 17:21. The teaching is the whole day’s hinge.

Hester panim can be misread as: spirit withdrew, therefore matter is ownerless. Hayom Yom refuses that sentence. Even on the earth — ba’aretz, in the low place, in the year that grew fat and kicked — Israel remains bound to the One. The bond is not a feeling of ahavah betaanugim. The bond is a fact of peoplehood under God.

Then the two transformations, kept in order.

God makes spirit into matter. Creation is that act. Today is the third day: dry land appears; seed and fruit according to their kinds. Spirit does not remain above as a protest against soil. The Holy One puts holiness into bread, time, bodies, land.

Israel makes matter into spirit. That is the work that answers 32:20. When the Face is hidden, the assigned labor is not to wait for a better atmosphere. It is to take the table, the coin, the child's hour, the chamber and the street, and return them as avodah. Yesterday's Hayom Yom was soak, salt, rinse — blood drawn from meat so the meat may be eaten. Today's Hayom Yom is the purpose of that permitted meat: matter that has been made fit is ready to be raised.

A generation of changes becomes unrecognizable when it accepts only one of the two transformations. If it wants spirit without matter, it will despise the Field and call delay "purity." If it wants matter without spirit, it will grow fat and kick. The Alter Rebbe's sentence holds both. God already did His direction. The last days of Elul are Israel's direction.

VI. Third Day of Creation: Dry Land, and Vegetation According to Its Kind

"Let the water beneath the heavens gather into one place, and let the dry land appear." God saw that it was good. "Let the earth sprout vegetation, seed-yielding herbs and fruit trees producing fruit according to its kind." God saw that it was good. Evening and morning: a third day.

Yesterday was the expanse — separation without a place to stand, the day the plain reading does not call "good" by itself. Today the land appears and is called good twice: once for the appearing, once for the kinds.

Elul 27 is a third-day morning. Distinctions drawn on 26 Elul were not yet a world. Today something has to stand above the water and bear fruit that still knows its seed.

Dry land: a stance that can be recognized as reared. Not a mood. A place. According to its kind: teshuvah that produces the fruit of the thing planted, not a generic fog of regret. The year now closing had kinds. The repair should be able to name them. Twice "good": appearing is already good; fruiting is another good. Do not skip the first because the second is not finished. Two days from Erev Rosh Hashanah, standing up out of the water is already a day's work.

The yahrtzeit of Rabbi Shalom of Belz and of Rabbi Nathan Adler — a founder of a path, a hidden mystic who taught the Chatam Sofer — sit on the same date as dry land. Transmission is one of the ways matter becomes spirit: a kind that still carries its seed.

VII. The Twelve Days: Today Answers for Tammuz

From 18 Elul the camp has been walking twelve days that answer for the twelve months. Today is the tenth. Today answers for Tammuz of the year now closing.

Tammuz is breach and heat: the walls, the first tablets broken, the fast, the long light that does not yet know how to mourn. It is also the month in which a people learns what a hidden Face feels like in public. Hester is Tammuz's grammar when the year went wrong.

The repair is not a speech about resilience. The repair is counsel: reading the Author of the end when the Face is not available as companionship. Ask, in one sitting, where Tammuz of this year broke a wall, and where "our hand did this" became the explanation. Write one sentence. That sentence is the day's cheshbon.

VIII. Practical Avodah and Chinuch

One avodah for 27 Elul.

Read 32:20 slowly, once in Hebrew if you can, once in a translation you trust. Mark the two verbs: I will hide; I will see. Do not let the first cancel the second. Ask the unrecognizability question, not only the sin list: what in this year would not be readable as the child who was reared? One sentence is enough. Do one act that turns matter into spirit — Hayom Yom's direction. A coin, a meal, a washed hand before a blessing you usually rush, a chamber put in order, a call that costs. Do not wait for ahavah betaanugim. In Selichot or at the table, say Psalm 80's refrain once with intention: cause Your Face to shine, and we will be saved. It is permitted to ask for shining on the morning the song records hiding. Name one place where "our hand did this" became the house theology — success or collapse — and return the sentence to its Author.

For the table and the children.

God can hide a Face and still see the end. Children can learn both halves. Hidden is not gone. Arrows can be used up. We cannot. That is not a slogan for toughness. It is Rashi's blessing inside a curse, and it is how a family talks about a hard year without lying. Sword outside, terror inside. Ask, gently, what frightened us in the street this year and what frightened us in the house. Both are in the verse. Dry land today. After two days of water-talk, name one solid thing the family will stand on into Tishrei: a blessing at the table, a time without devices, a coin set aside, a verse kept in the mouth. Israel makes matter into spirit. Give a child a small piece of matter — bread, a coin, a pencil — and one sentence of what raising it looks like tonight.

Civic-covenantal note, kept close to the text. A hidden Face is not an empty throne. Law continues when presence is not felt; that is the difference between covenant and weather. "Our hand was triumphant; the Lord did none of this" is the sentence every dominating power wants written on someone else's wound. A people that accepts that sentence — about its victories or about its ruins — has already left non-domination for a story in which the strongest visible hand is the author of the end. Spent arrows mean wrath itself is under limit. A non-people answering a non-god is what happens when identity refuses the One and then cannot explain why the next crowd may not rule it. Counsel is the capacity to read a higher law when the Field feels empty. Two days remain in which that reading is still a morning walk, not yet a throne-room plea.

IX. Synthesis

The portions of 27 Elul do not quarrel.

Haazinu hides a Face and refuses to hide the Eye. It spends arrows and refuses to spend the name. It answers a non-god with a non-people and then will not let the enemy write the last line.

The Songs of Ascents climb anyway. Psalm 80 asks for the Face to shine on the same date the song conceals it. Psalm 81 remembers Egypt, an open mouth, and counsel refused.

Tanya will not make delight the condition of work. Attachment is in the deed. Gift-love is gift. Thirst is labor.

Rambam names the residue of what is not God, the chain of contact, and the busyness of hands — and then cuts mercy around the pregnant and the infant.

Hayom Yom binds Israel to the One on the earth, and assigns the direction of the last days: matter into spirit.

The third day lets land appear and fruit keep its seed.

Tammuz, on the tenth of the twelve, is the month that taught public hester. The repair is counsel, not noise.

Different traditional emphases remain in force and should not be flattened. Peshat keeps the terror of the verses. Sifrei keeps the hidden blessing of the arrows. Chassidus keeps the Field open and the deed higher than the taste. Halachah keeps impurity nameable so that it can be washed. Civic reading keeps “our hand” from becoming a constitution. The synthesis is not a blend that softens any of them. It is the refusal to choose a single register while the King is still in the Field.

Two days to Erev Rosh Hashanah. Three to the first of Tishrei. Stand on the dry land that appeared this morning. Hide nothing that the chambers hold. Do not call the hidden Face an empty sky. Transform one piece of matter before night.

Extended Bibliography

Tanakh and classical exegesis

Devarim 32:19–28, with Rashi and Sifrei Devarim on Haazinu. Sefaria: Deuteronomy 32 Sifrei Devarim 32:20–27, on hester, arrows, and the withheld annihilation. Ramban, Ibn Ezra, and Sforno on Devarim 32:20–27 (hester panim; “I will see what their end will be”). Tehillim 120–134; 79–81. Sefaria: Psalms 120 Divrei HaYamim I 17:21 — “Israel, one nation on the earth.” Bereishit 1:9–13 — third day of Creation. Yeshayahu 23:13; Ovadiah 1:2; Tehillim 14:1 — Rashi’s “non-people” and “foolish nation.”

Halakhah

Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot She’ar Avot HaTum’ah 6–8. Sefaria Rambam, Sefer HaMitzvot, Positive Commandment 97 — impurity of sheratzim. Chabad digest Daily Rambam cycle for 9 September 2026. Chabad

Chassidus and Elul

Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 18 (beginning); Epistle 17 as immediate prior context. Chabad Tanya for the date Hayom Yom, Elul 27. Chabad Hayom Yom, Tevet 27 and Adar II 29 — cross-references noted in the Elul 27 entry. Likkutei Torah and later Chabad Elul discourses on Ani le-dodi ve-dodi li and the King in the Field (R. Schneur Zalman; R. Yosef Yitzchak; R. Menachem Mendel Schneerson). Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, Iggeret HaTeshuvah — teshuvah as return when the Face is not felt as delight.

High Holiday and seasonal

Unetanneh Tokef; Selichot liturgy of the days before Rosh Hashanah — hester and the plea for a shining Face. Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah 2–3 — the ten days; free will; being written. Chabad.org, calendar and customs for 27 Elul 5786. Daily calendar

Civic and republican sources used only where the text already speaks

Philip Pettit, Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government — freedom as non-domination; power that can interfere at will even when it presently does not. Eric Nelson, The Hebrew Republic — early-modern readings of biblical peoplehood and limited rule under law. Yoram Hazony, The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture — the Tanakh as political teaching, including the refusal to let visible force author the end.

Daily study portals for this date

Chumash, Haazinu 4th. Chabad Tehillim 120–134. Chabad

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