

Remember the Days of Old — The World Begins, and the Portion Is His ## Daily Learning Portions for 25 Elul 5786 — Elul Expansion

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Monday, 7 September 2026 · כ"ה אלול תשפ"ו · Haazinu, 2nd Day 25 of Elul · eighth of the twelve monthly-cheshbon days (today = Iyar of the year now closing) 4 days to Erev Rosh Hashanah 5787 (Friday, 11 September 2026) · 5 days to Rosh Hashanah (Shabbat, 12 September 2026) Ashkenaz Selichot: weekday mornings in force · daily shofar · extra Tehillim On this date: first day of Creation (25 Elul); walls of Jerusalem completed by Nehemiah (25 Elul, 335 BCE); yahrtzeit of R. Elazar son of R. Shimon bar Yochai; yahrtzeit of R. Yehiel Michel of Zlotchov (5546 / 1786)

Today's Daily Learning Portions

| Cycle | Portion | |---|---| | **Chumash** | Parshat Haazinu, 2nd aliyah — Devarim 32:7–32:12 | | **Tehillim** | Chapter 119, verses 1–96 (Elul extra chapters: 73–75 per Hayom Yom / Baal Shem Tov custom) | | **Tanya** | Iggeret HaKodesh, middle of Epistle 17 | | **Rambam (3 ch.)** | Hilchot Metamei Mishkav uMoshav 13; Hilchot She'ar Avot HaTum'ah 1–2 | | **Sefer HaMitzvot** | Daily cycle Day 217 — P104 (impurity of a zav, concluding register) and P96 (impurity of an animal carcass) | | **Hayom Yom** | Elul 25 — the seventh month is blessed by God Himself; *Atem nitzavim hayom*: you stand, and you will be vindicated | | **Seasonal overlay** | Weekday Selichot; daily shofar; tefillin and mezuzot; extra Tehillim; increased tzedakah and Ahavat Yisrael; four days to Erev Rosh Hashanah |

Seasonal frame. Yesterday the song opened by summoning heaven and earth, naming Torah as rain and dew, declaring the Rock's work perfect, and assigning the defect to the children. Today the song turns from indictment to memory.

“Remember the days of old.” On the Jewish calendar those words fall on the morning the world itself is said to have begun. Tradition places the first day of Creation on the 25th of Elul: existence, time, matter, darkness and light. Rosh Hashanah is the sixth day — the creation of the one who must answer for the other five. The song does not ask Israel to remember a mood. It asks Israel to remember origin.

Hayom Yom on this date is not a footnote to last Shabbat. It is the blessing under which this whole last week of Elul stands. The seventh month is not blessed by the congregation in shul. God Himself blesses Tishrei on the last Shabbat of Elul. *Atem nitzavim hayom* — you stand this day — is read as the day of the great judgment, and as the promise that you remain standing: vindicated. Last Shabbat the camp already heard that reading. Today the camp lives inside its force.

The King remains in the Field. The walls of a city were finished on this date once. An eagle still hovers rather than dropping into the nest. Four days remain.

I. The Second Aliyah: Memory, Portion, Wilderness, Eagle

> “Remember the days of old; consider the years of generation and generation. Ask your father, and he will tell you; your elders, and they will say to you.” (Devarim 32:7)

Rashi, following Sifrei: remember what was done to the first ones who angered Him. “Your father” — the prophets, who are called fathers (“My father, my father, chariot of Israel”). “Your elders” — the Sages. Memory is not private nostalgia. It is a chain of speech. The verse assumes that a father still exists to be asked, and that an elder still exists who will answer. Elul *cheshbon* that never leaves the self has already broken the grammar of 32:7. Return that cannot be told is not yet transmission.

On 25 Elul the phrase “days of old” has a second edge. The days of old begin this morning. Time itself is one of the created things. A people that forgets origin will treat judgment as weather rather than as the sixth day’s accounting for the first five.

> “When the Most High gave nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of man, He set the borders of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.” (32:8)

Rashi: when He allotted inheritance to those who angered Him, He could have erased the Generation of Division. He did not. He established borders and let them live. “According to the number of the children of Israel” — for the sake of the seventy souls who would go down to Egypt, seventy tongues; for the sake of those destined to come forth from Shem. The map of the nations is not a neutral geography. It is drawn with Israel already in view. Elul hears the claim without turning it into contempt for the nations. The point is particular love with a purpose, not a license to forget that the Rock’s ways are justice.

> “For the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” (32:9)

Rashi: why all this restraint toward the nations? Because His portion was still bound among them and was destined to come forth. Who is His people? Jacob — the third of the fathers, a cord of three strands: merit of the father’s father, merit of the father, and his own. Not Ishmael. Not Esau. *Chevel nachalato* — a measured cord, not an accident of affection. Elul teshuvah that treats chosenness as a feeling will miss the verse. A portion is claimed. A cord can be tightened or frayed. It is not a mood.

> “He found him in a desert land, and in the waste of a howling wilderness; He encircled him, bestowed understanding upon him, guarded him as the pupil of His eye.” (32:10)

Rashi: He found them faithful in the wilderness. They accepted Torah, kingship, and yoke where Ishmael and Esau would not. Even in a place of jackals they were drawn after emunah and did not say to Moses, How shall we go out into desolation? *Yesovevenu* — He surrounded them with clouds. *Yevonehu* — He gave them Torah. *Yitzrenhu ke’ishon eino* — He guarded them as the dark of the eye is guarded, the point that sees and must itself be shielded.

The wilderness is not only Sinai behind us. Elul is a howling place of a different kind: inventory, Selichot before dawn, a year that will not flatter. The verse says He is found *there*. Not only in the settled house. The pupil of the eye is the image for this week: small, wet, easily injured, and the organ of seeing. A camp that will not be guarded cannot see.

> “As an eagle stirs its nest, hovers over its young, spreads its wings, takes them, bears them on its pinions —” (32:11)

Rashi: the eagle does not enter the nest suddenly, so as not to frighten. It beats the wings above so the young awaken and have strength to receive it. It carries them on the wings, not in the talons: if an arrow comes, the eagle takes the arrow, not the young. So the Holy One: “I carried you on eagles’ wings.” The clouds took the shafts. He went before them.

This is the chinuch verse of the aliyah, and it is the Elul verse of leadership. The King in the Field is not a sudden drop into the nest. He is near, circling, waking rather than crushing. A father who only lands, and never hovers, trains fear without strength. A father who only hovers, and never carries, trains sentiment without cover. The eagle does both.

> “The Lord alone led him, and there was no foreign god with Him.” (32:12)

Alone — not by an intermediary that would let the camp split its loyalty. No alien deity with Him — they needed no second help. The second aliyah ends on exclusive guidance. Elul that adds a private god — career, image, the unexamined appetite — beside the Rock has already contradicted 32:12 while reciting it.

Readings that must be kept distinct.

- *Peshat*: remember origin; ask the living chain; the nations’ map is set with Israel in view; Jacob is the measured portion; the wilderness was the place of finding; the eagle is the manner of leading; guidance was unshared.
- Rashi / Sifrei: prophets and Sages as father and elders; seventy tongues for seventy souls; a three-strand cord; clouds, Torah, and the pupil of the eye; wings that take the arrow.
- Mussar: forgetting generations is the first foolishness after yesterday’s *naval ve-lo chacham*; a second help is already a second master.
- Chassidic: 25 Elul is the world’s first morning; the King in the Field is the eagle’s hover before the throne-room of Tishrei; *keter* in today’s Tanya is the same encompassing cover the verse names as wing and pupil.
- Civic-covenantal: a free people stores origin in fathers and elders, not only in archives; borders and portion language are claims of responsibility, not of appetite; exclusive leadership under Heaven is the opposite of a strongman who cannot be asked.

II. Tehillim 119:1–96 and the Extra Chapters 73–75

The monthly Tehillim for the 25th of a Hebrew month is the great alphabetic psalm, first ninety-six verses — *aleph* through *mem*.

119 is not atmosphere. It is a lexicon of walking: *ashrei temimei darech*; “Your word have I hidden in my heart”; “I am a stranger in the earth; do not hide Your commandments from me”; “Your commandment is very wide” — the verse Tanya has been using as the name of *tzedakah*. On the morning the world is said to begin, the camp reads a psalm in which every letter of the alphabet is placed under the yoke of statutes, testimonies, precepts, and the way.

Elul extra chapters per the Baal Shem Tov’s custom, listed with this date’s Hayom Yom: 73–75.

73: God is good to Israel, to the pure of heart — and then the stumble of envy at the quiet of the wicked, until the Sanctuary is entered and their end is seen. 74: Why, O God, have You cast off forever? Remember Your congregation, which You acquired of old. The word *kanita* returns from 32:6 into a psalm of ruin and plea. 75: We give thanks; the earth and its dwellers are dissolved, but He sets its pillars. Judgment is His, not the horn of the arrogant.

The pairing is exact. 119 trains the letters. 73–75 refuse a piety that cannot look at the success of the crooked and still bless the Judge. 74 will not let “acquired of old” remain yesterday’s grammar. 25 Elul is Creation morning and a psalm of a ruined Sanctuary on the same page. Memory includes both.

III. Tanya — Iggeret HaKodesh, Middle of Epistle 17

Yesterday the epistle opened with arousal from below drawing *Av HaRachamim*, fruits in this world and principal for the World to Come, *tzedakah* as the wide commandment and as the path God walks.

Today the middle of the letter turns to the Sages’ teaching: in the World to Come there is no eating and drinking; the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads and take delight in the radiance of the Presence. A crown — *atarah* — encompasses. It is *keter*, from the capital that crowns a column. The illumination in question is not the inner light of Gan Eden, measured to the vessel. It is a light from *keter* that descends without the ordinary contractions and encompasses all worlds equally.

Keter joins infinite Ein Sof to what is emanated. In the future it will radiate in this world, at the Resurrection, to the righteous — and “Your people are all righteous.” That light makes possible a seeing of Essence, *re’iyat ha-mahut*, of the kind promised in “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see.” The righteous will be called *kadosh*: set apart from apprehension, because *chochmah* itself is drawn from *ayin*, and *ayin* is the upper *keter*.

“Their beginning is wedged in their end.” The highest rung is revealed not in a disembodied Gan Eden but in this physical world at the Revival, because this world was first in thought. Physical mitzvot — likened to columns of light — elicit that encompassing radiance. To receive *sovev kol almin* one must have known the inner light first; then the dew of Torah revives, and speech returns, and the deeds done below draw the crown.

Place this against 25 Elul without strain. The world that began this morning as matter and light is not a waiting room for a later spirituality. It is the end that was first in thought. The eagle’s wing in 32:11 is an encompassing cover, not an escape from the nest. The pupil of the eye in 32:10 is a physical organ guarded so that seeing can happen here. Tanya’s *keter* is the same grammar in another key: the highest does not despise the body. It intends it.

Elul teshuvah that treats the coming ten days as an exit from the world has misread both the date and the letter. The days of awe are a return *into* the world that was created this morning, under a crown that will one day sit on heads of flesh.

IV. Rambam — Metamei Mishkav uMoshav 13 · She'ar Avot HaTum'ah 1–2 · Sefer HaMitzvot P104 / P96

The three-chapter cycle closes the tract of those who defile bed or seat and opens the tract of other sources of impurity.

Chapter 13 of *Metamei Mishkav uMoshav* finishes the social architecture of midras: how presumption, utensils, and shared space complete the laws of one who transmits by sitting and lying. Then *She'ar Avot HaTum'ah* begins: the remaining fathers of impurity — carcass, and the other sources that do not wait for a discharge to announce themselves. Sefer HaMitzvot on this stretch of the cycle holds the *zav* (P104) and the impurity of *neveilah* (P96): hidden flow, and the carcass that is simply there.

The Elul reading is the same discipline as yesterday, now sharpened. Some impurity announces itself as a condition. Some impurity is a fact on the ground — a carcass in the camp — and must be named without theater. Cheshbon that only inventories dramatic failures will miss the *neveilah*: the dead thing left in a relationship, a speech-habit, a neglected duty, which transmits because it is present, not because anyone planned a scene.

Boundaries remain the point. A camp that cannot say what defiles cannot say what it is guarding as the pupil of the eye. Purity language is not an invitation to contempt. It is how holy things stay distinguishable from what merely accumulates.

V. Hayom Yom — Elul 25

The entry carries the 5703 calendar notes — entire Tehillim in the early morning; a day of farbrengen when that Elul 25 was Shabbat; Selichot after midnight on the first night, early morning on the remaining days — and then the teaching.

The Alter Rebbe related: in Mezritch he heard from the Maggid, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov: the seventh month, first of the months of the year, is blessed by God Himself on Shabbat *mevarchim*, the last Shabbat of Elul. With that power Israel blesses the other months eleven times a year.

It is written, *Atem nitzavim hayom*. *Hayom* refers to Rosh Hashanah, the day of judgment — “the day came,” which Targum renders as the day of the great judgment. Yet you remain standing firmly upright: you will be vindicated in judgment.

On the Shabbat preceding Rosh Hashanah, the last Shabbat of Elul, we read *Atem nitzavim*. That reading is God's blessing of the seventh month. Tishrei is itself sated — *shevi'i* heard as *sova* — and in turn satiates all Israel with abundance of good for the duration of the coming year.

In 5786 that Shabbat has already been. It fell on 23 Elul, and the reading was Nitzavim–Vayelech. Today is not the blessing's announcement. Today is life inside the blessing already given. The congregation does not stand this week and bless Tishrei with the usual formula. The absence is not a lack. It is a deference. The month we are about to enter was blessed from Above.

Elul 25 therefore has a double standing. The world begins. The year that will judge the world has already been blessed. *Nitzavim* — planted, upright — is the posture, not slump and not swagger. Vindication is promised as standing, not as the cancellation of judgment.

VI. The Date Itself

25 Elul — first day of Creation. Existence, time, matter, darkness and light. The song says *zekhor yemot olam* on the morning *olam* is said to have started. Rosh Hashanah, five days from now, is the sixth day: the creation of the being who can remember, ask a father, and choose. Cheshbon that treats the self as the center of Creation has inverted the week. The human being arrives late on purpose.

Walls of Jerusalem completed, 25 Elul 335 BCE. Nehemiah 6:15. The wall was finished on the twenty-fifth of Elul, after fifty-two days. Encirclement as protection, not as prison: *yesovevenu*, the same verb family as 32:10. A city that can be entered at will by every threat is not yet a pupil of the eye. Teshuvah that never rebuilds a boundary is still wilderness without the cloud.

R. Elazar son of R. Shimon bar Yochai. The son who carried a father's fire through a body that the Gemara will not flatten into a simple story. On a morning of eagles and young, a son's *yahrtzeit* is not decoration. Transmission is the verse's first command.

R. Yehiel Michel of Zlotchov, 25 Elul 5546 (1786). Disciple of the Baal Shem Tov. The same chain that Hayom Yom cites this morning — Baal Shem Tov to Maggid to Alter Rebbe — includes a disciple who died on the world's birthday. Chassidus is not an atmosphere added to the song. It is one of the elders 32:7 said to ask.

Eighth of the twelve days — today answers for Iyar. 18 Elul = Tishrei. 19 = Cheshvan. 20 = Kislev. 21 = Tevet. 22 = Shevat. 23 = Adar. 24 = Nisan. **25 = Iyar.** 26 = Sivan. 27 = Tammuz. 28 = Av. 29 = Elul. Iyar's questions: Did we heal, or only endure? Did we use the second chance (Pesach Sheni lives in this month)? Did counting remain a discipline or become a drift? *Ani Hashem Rofecha* is Iyar's acronym. The eagle wakes the young so they have strength to receive. Healing is not only repair after breakage. It is strength given before the next carrying.

Selichot and shofar. Weekday Selichot continue before dawn. The shofar is sounded. Four days to Erev Rosh Hashanah. The Field is still open. Creation morning is not a reason to skip the standing. It is the reason the standing has a world to answer in.

VII. Approaches and a Constructive Synthesis

Traditional readings of 32:7–12 split along lines Elul can hold.

One line, peshat and Sifrei, stresses historical memory and particular love. The Generation of Division was spared; seventy tongues wait for seventy souls; Jacob is the cord; the wilderness was the place of accepted yoke.

A second line, later parshanut and mussar, stresses the moral use of memory. Ask your father. Ask your elders. Forgetting is already repayment in the wrong direction. A foreign god is any second loyalty that shares the leading.

A third line, Chassidic, hears the eagle and the pupil as the King in the Field: near, circling, covering, not yet the throne-room. Hayom Yom adds that Tishrei is already blessed, so the nearness has a term and a promise: you will stand.

A fourth line, today's Tanya, refuses to let Creation morning become a preface to leaving the body. *Keter* intends this world. Mitzvot done in matter draw the crown that will sit on heads of flesh.

A fifth line, the date-companions, insists on building. Nehemiah's wall. A son who received a father's fire. A disciple of the Baal Shem Tov. Iyar's second chance. Rambam's unnamed carcass on the ground.

Synthesis for this morning: remember origin because origin is today. Ask a living mouth because the song is a chain, not a file. Accept that the portion is claimed, which is obligation, not compliment. Let the eagle's manner govern how teshuvah is done in a house — wake, do not smash; cover, do not drop. Keep the leading unshared. Live inside the blessing already spoken over Tishrei. Do the physical mitzvah as if the world that began this morning were first in thought, because it was. Mark Iyar: heal what can still be healed; take the second chance that is still on the calendar.

VIII. Practical Avodah and Chinuch

One avodah for 25 Elul. Ask one living elder — father, mother, teacher, older neighbor in the covenant — one question about a year that is ending, and write the answer before night. 32:7 is not a metaphor. It is an assignment.

Memory. Tell one “days of old” story at the table that is not a sermon: a grandparent, a leaving, a kindness that cost. Creation morning is wasted if the children hear only atmosphere.

The eagle. Change one approach to a child or a student today: hover first. Do not drop the rebuke into the nest without giving strength to receive it. Carry one thing that would otherwise hit them.

Exclusive leading. Name one “foreign god” that has been sharing the month — a habit of speech, a screen, a fear dressed as prudence — and set it down for twenty-four hours. 32:12 is a test that can be failed politely.

Iyar on the twelve-day page. Ask: what needed healing this year and was only endured? What second chance was offered and left unused? One concrete repair is worth more than a paragraph of inventory.

Tzedakah and the body. Yesterday Tanya named the path God walks. Today Tanya names the crown that intends flesh. Give in a way that is physical — food, time, a visit — not only a transfer that never leaves a chair.

Selichot and shofar. Stand. Sound. Do not let Creation-day language become an excuse to skip the ordinary work of the last four weekdays.

At the table, usable with children. - Why does the Torah say “ask your father”? Because remembering is a conversation, not a feeling in the room. - Why an eagle and not a lion in this verse? Because the young have to be woken, not only ruled. - “The Lord alone led him.” What

tries to sit in the second seat in our house? - Today the world is said to have begun. What is one created thing we will treat more carefully until night? - Today answers for Iyar. Healing and second chances. What is one small repair we can still make?

What not to do. Do not read chosenness in 32:8–9 as contempt. Do not read the eagle as softness that never carries. Do not read Hayom Yom's promised vindication as a cancellation of judgment. Do not treat Tanya's World to Come as permission to neglect this one. Do not let Selichot replace the asking of a living father. Do not spend Creation morning only on logistics for next week.

IX. Covenantal-Republican Resonance (only where the text already speaks)

Free will remains the ground. 32:7 commands memory as an act, not as a mood that arrives. Asking is a deed. Standing in Hayom Yom is a posture that can be refused. Vindication is promised to those who remain upright, not to those who were never examined.

Limited authority under higher law appears in 32:12 without strain. The Lord alone led him. No office in the camp is licensed to share that seat. A republic of non-domination that installs a second god — party, market, image, the unaccountable expert — has already rewritten the verse. Exclusive leading by Heaven is what keeps human leading limited.

Transmission is the civic hinge of 32:7. A people that cannot ask its fathers and elders will not keep a covenant that was spoken into being. Archives without living mouths are yesterday's witnesses without yesterday's *ha'azinu*. Chinuch is not a private hobby of pious households. It is how a free people stores consent across deaths.

Portion-language in 32:8–9 is a claim of responsibility. Borders set “according to the number of the children of Israel” are not a brief for appetite. They are a reminder that particular love has a purpose and that restraint toward the nations was already practiced by the Judge who could have erased and did not. A covenantal republic that forgets restraint while quoting chosenness has inverted Rashi's reading of the Generation of Division.

The wall finished on this date is the civic face of *yesovevenu*. Liberty that cannot draw a line will not guard the pupil of its own eye. Non-domination is not the absence of boundary. It is boundary that does not belong to a master.

Tanya's insistence that the highest intends this world keeps the whole structure from floating. A politics of virtue that despises matter will not keep mitzvot, and a politics of matter that despises *keter* will not know why the wall was worth fifty-two days.

X. Extended Bibliography

Primary — Chumash and Meforshim - Devarim 32:7–12, with Rashi, Ramban, Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Sifrei Devarim on Haazinu. Sefaria, Deuteronomy 32 - Rashi on 32:7 (prophets as fathers; Sages as elders), 32:8 (Generation of Division spared; seventy tongues), 32:9 (Jacob as three-strand cord), 32:10 (faithful in the wilderness; clouds, Torah, pupil of the eye), 32:11 (eagle that wakes and carries on the wings), 32:12 (the Lord alone). - Chabad.org, Haazinu - Chabad.org daily Chumash for this date

Tehillim - Psalm 119:1–96. Sefaria, Psalms 119 - Extra Elul chapters 73–75. Sefaria, Psalms 73

Tanya and Chassidus - Iggeret HaKodesh, middle of Epistle 17. Chabad.org, Epistle 17 - Chabad.org Tanya for this date - Hayom Yom, Elul 25. Chabad.org, Hayom Yom Elul 25 - Alter Rebbe on the King in the Field (Likkutei Torah, Re'eh; Elul discourses). - Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah 5 and 7 (free will; the reach of return). - Tanya I on *keter*, *sovev*, and *memale*.

Rambam and Halakhah - Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Metamei Mishkav uMoshav 13; Hilchot She'ar Avot HaTum'ah 1–2. Sefaria - Sefer HaMitzvot, Positive Commandments 104 and 96. Chabad.org Daily Mitzvah - Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah; Hilchot Melachim; Hilchot Deot.

Elul / High Holiday / Date - Chabad.org calendar, 25 Elul 5786 / 7 September 2026 - Elul observances: shofar, extra Tehillim, tefillin and mezuzot, Ahavat Yisrael. Chabad.org, Elul - First day of Creation, 25 Elul. Chabad.org, 25 Elul - Completion of Jerusalem's walls, Nehemiah 6:15. Sefaria, Nehemiah 6 - Passing of R. Elazar son of R. Shimon bar Yochai. [Chabad.org calendar notes for the date] - Passing of R. Yehiel Michel of Zlotchov, 25 Elul 5546. [Chabad.org] - Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer on the days of Creation and Rosh Hashanah as the sixth day. - Mishnah Berurah, Orach Chaim on Elul, Selichot, and Rosh Hashanah.

Covenantal and republican touchpoints (used only where the verses already speak) - Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah 5:1–4 (bechirah). - Devarim 30:19 and 32:7 taken together: choose, and remember. - Philip Pettit, *Republicanism* (non-domination as the absence of a master, not the absence of law). - Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic* (Hebraic sources for limited public power under higher law). - Hayom Yom Elul 25 on standing upright in judgment as a public, not only private, posture.

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