

Daily Directions for Elul Spiritual Practice



Gather: *Gather everything together before you begin:*

Readings for Elul Packet

Reflection for Focus questions

Notebook and pencil

Timer

Musical recording

Settle:

Sit still, pay attention, take a deep breath.

Sing, listen to, or hum along to, *Hayom* (or something else if you prefer).

Bless:

Read the blessing in Hebrew or English.

Take another deep breath.

Read:

Read for just five minutes.

Read the passage aloud (if possible)

Read the Reflection for Focus questions (maybe twice).

Write: Write for just five minutes:

Write whatever comes to mind about the Reflection for Focus questions or something you noticed about a word or phrase or idea in the passage. It doesn't matter what you write, just write. Don't edit or erase, try not to censor your words, just write for just five minutes.

Use these prompts if you need help getting started: *How does a phrase (or a different two to four words) speak to you today and why? What memories or images, what aspirations or questions does it evoke?*

Sit: Set the timer for just 5 minutes.

Sit comfortably. Your feet might be on the floor, your hands could rest on your lap or thighs, and perhaps close your eyes or lower your gaze.

Start the timer.

Try to pay attention to only your breath— try to feel it moving in and out of your lungs.

Try to think about the phrase related to the Reflection for Focus questions, or what you just wrote, or what you just read. When you get distracted, go back to paying attention to your breath, and try again to think about what you read or wrote, or say a phrase over and over in your head.

Forgive:

Show compassion to yourself if you got distracted.

Remember:

Take a photo of the phrase and make it your screen saver.

Celebrate:

Give thanks that you made time for this spiritual practice.

Musical Intention**היום**

היום תִּאֲמְצֵינוּ *Hayom t'amtzeinu*

היום תִּבְרַכֵּנוּ *Hayom t'varcheinu*

היום תִּגְדְּלֵנוּ אָמֵן *Hayom t'gadleinu, Amen*

Today, give us strength

Today, give us blessing

Today, raise us up

Amen!

Blessing for the Practice

הַרִינִי מְזַמְנֵתָּ מְזַמֵּן אֶת פִּי לְהוֹדוֹת אֶת יְדֵי לִיצוֹר
אֶת לְבִי לְפִתּוֹחַ וְאֶת חַיֵּי לְעִבּוֹד בְּדַבְרֵי תּוֹרָה וּתְפִלָּה

Here. Now. I prepare my lips to praise

Hareini m'zamenet/ m'zamein eit pi l'hodot

my hands to create

eit yadai litzor

my heart to open

eit libi lifto-ach

my life to be lived with holy words.

eit chayai laavod b'divrei Torah ut'filah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תּוֹרָה.

BARUCH ATA ADONAI ELOHEYNU MELECH HA-OLAM, ASHER KIDSHANU B'MITZVOTAV V'TZIVANU LA-ASOK B'DIVREY TORAH.

We praise You, our Eternal God, whose presence fills creation. You bring us holiness through MITZVOT and command us to engage in the study of TORAH.

Musical Intention "Hayom" from the piyyut (liturgical poem) of the Italian rite for the High Holidays. Musical setting: Craig Taubman (from the album *Inscribed*, 2005), singable English setting and movements: Eliana Light.

Daily Directions and Blessing for the Practice adapted from "Opening Your Heart with Psalm 27: A Spiritual Practice for the Jewish New Year" by Rabbi Debra J. Robbins, CCAR Press.