

fixed text and needed to be performed only once each day. But by drawing an outline of how this unstructured מצוה was performed each day, the רמב"ם gave us a basis to argue that he maintained that ever since מתן תורה Jews have been performing the מצוה of תפלה, perhaps not in the format that we are accustomed to follow but in the manner he described.

סליחות

Why do recite סליחות for at least four days before ראש השנה?

Two reasons were given for reciting סליחות for at least four days before ראש השנה. 1. A מדרש on כב מדרש explained that for each of the holidays, the תורה used the language "והקרבתם" in providing that a קרבן עולה be brought to commemorate that holiday but for ראש השנה the תורה used the language "ועשיתם". The מדרש interpreted the word "ועשיתם" to mean that the תורה wanted each of us to prepare ourselves to be the קרבן. Since a קרבן עולת התמיד was checked regularly for blemishes during the four days prior to its sacrifice so too we must thoroughly check ourselves for blemishes four days prior to ראש השנה. 2. There was a custom to fast during the עשרת ימי תשובה. However, within the עשרת ימי תשובה, there were four days when fasting could not take place; the two days of ראש שובה and ערב יום כיפור. To compensate for those four days, some fasted during the four days prior to ראש השנה.

Why do we begin to recite סליחות on מוצאי שבת?

The reason that we begin to recite סליחות on מוצאי שבת has more to do with the fact that we want to begin reciting סליחות on יום ראשון than it does on it being מוצאי שבת. In this matter, ששת ימי בראשית of יום ראשון represents יום ראשון. רבונו של עולם began creating the world on Sunday, כה' אלול. Man was created on ערב שבת the first day of תשרי, the first day of ראש השנה. We want to begin approaching the רבונו של עולם for סליחה on the anniversary of the first day of creation. We begin on מוצאי שבת after חצות when יום ראשון begins because we want to begin asking for סליחה while the memory of having fulfilled the מצוה of שמירת שבת is still fresh.