SELICHOT: Sephardic and Ashkenazi traditions

Today is the 2nd day of Elul, 5770

As we mentioned yesterday, during the month of Elul until Yom Kippur the Sepharadic custom is to wake up earlier in the morning to recite the Selichot prayer.

Selichot is a special Tefila that is traditionally said **before** the morning prayer (Shacharit).Technically, Selichot could be said also during nighttime or even during the day. There is only one period of time which is **not suitable** for reciting Selichot –following a very ancient custom instructed by Chakhme haKabbalah z'l-: **in between sunset and midnight** (*middat hadin*). By the way, Halakhically speaking, midnight (*chatzot*) is not necessarily at 12.00 AM but it's calculated 12 hours from midday (when the sun is exactly on the zenith). For example, today in NY midday is at 1.01 PM, therefore midnight will be at 1.01 AM.

The Ashkenazi Minhag is to start Selichot service Sunday before Rosh haShana. But if Rosh haShana falls on Monday or Tuesday (**it can never fall Sunday**) Selichot will begin two Sundays before Rosh haShana.

During the entire month of Elul the Ashkenazim and most Sepharadim have the custom to blow the Shofar. The Ashkenazim blow the Shofar **at the end** of Shacharit. Our custom is to blow the Shofar at the end of Selichot service, right **before** Shacharit . Many Sephardim (Moroccans, etc) blow the Shofar **also** while reciting the 13 attributes of mercy (*vaya'abor…*).