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בס"ד

מודיע תורני גיבראלטאר

# GTT

Gibraltar Torah Times

5784 Issue No. 4

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Shabbat Shemini Aseret

שבת שמיני עצרת

כ"ב תשרי תשפ"ד

Shabbat enters Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October at 7.38 pm

Yom Tov departs Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October 8.34 p.m.

# Shabbat Shemini Aseret

5784 GTT Issue 04

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Dear Kahal, ב"ח

The technicians are struggling to fix the GTT duplicator, which won't feed the sheets of paper into the machine. Please keep praying.

Continued dry weather enables us to have all our meals in the Sukkah and even sleep there, though at times the night wind does threaten to blow off the *sechaj* roofing.

On Tuesday night, the spacious Benady Family succah was the venue for another successful kumsitz organised by Mr Shuli Davidson for boys teenaged and older. Numerous guitarists, including R. Shmili Rothschild and Mr José Benchimol and of course Shuli Davidson himself accompanied the hearty singing while we are left to guess that Mrs Aviva Davidson aka Benady organised the delicious refreshments – thank you! Mr Eliyahu Levy explained the importance of Sukkot as being the culmination of the Tishri festivals and a special opportunity to surround oneself in Hashem's love, while Rabbi Hassid described his personal experiences in a Jerusalem Yeshiva exactly fifty years ago during Sukkot of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Many thanks to the Benadys and adjuncts, including Danny Benady who moderated the singing Mr Danny Benaim who ensured the smooth running of the event. Keep it up!

On Wednesday night, Dr Fareed invited key members of the community to a party in the Jewish Mackintosh Home Sukkah to mark the first anniversary of the opening of the newly-styled home. He spoke about the ethos of the home and some of the challenges he faces. Mr Hayim Levy spoke as did the Rabbi who explained its importance and why he personally attends the Shabbat evening services there.

Shabbat Shalom and Hatima Tova! *R Hassid*

	Shabbat Teshuva Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> October	Shabbat departs Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup>
Sydney, NSW	6.43 pm	7.40 pm
Jerusalem	5.42 pm	6.54 pm
Bnei Brak	5.57 pm	6.55 pm
Milano, Lombardy	6.36 pm	7.37 pm
Genève	6.48 pm	7.49 pm
Gateshead, Tyne & Wear	6.12 pm	7.22 pm
Manchester	6.19 pm	7.24 pm
Golders Green	6.12 pm	7.15 pm
Johannesburg, Gauteng	5.51 pm	6.45 pm
São Paulo	5.49 pm	6.42 pm
Long Branch, Monmouth	6.12 pm	7.10 pm
Lakewood, Ocean, NJ	6.13 pm	7.10 pm
Boca Raton, Palm Beach	6.43 pm	7.35 pm
Seattle, King, Washington	6.20 pm	7.23 pm

## AVOT UBANIM

Shabbat Shemini Asseret 7<sup>th</sup> October

**5.45 p.m.** in Nefusot Yehuda



Seuda Shelishith Shiurim for men:

**Guest Speakers**

**Shabbat Shiur for Ladies**

from Rabbi Z S Levy

Shemini Asseret 7<sup>th</sup> October 5.45 p.m.

in Nefusot Yehuda

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בס"ד

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TOGETHER WITH  
MICHAEL AND YEHUDIT ATTAR

TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN INVITING YOU TO  
CELEBRATE THE MARRIAGE  
OF THEIR DEAR CHILDREN

*Hannah*

חנה

&

*Gavriel Aharon*

גבריאל אהרון

TUESDAY 17TH OCTOBER 2023

ג' חשון תשפ"ד

REGENCY BANQUETING SUITE  
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LONDON N17 6UR

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CHUPPAH 6PM PROMPT FOLLOWED  
BY RECEPTION

**שמחת חתן וכלה AT 10.30 PM**

HONOURED GRANDPARENTS  
ESTHER COHEN DE NAHON  
MOSHE & GAIL HASSAN  
MARY ATTAR  
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**Address:** 91 Irish Town, P O Box 318, Gibraltar

**Charity No.** Registered in Gibraltar No. 47

## **Flat 1, 281 Main Street**

The HPF invites applications to rent a fully refurnished 2-bedroom, 1 bathroom flat of 65 sqm overlooking Convent Place.

The property located on the first floor is available at a subsidised rental sum of expected maximum of £1,000 per month (excluding utilities and bills).

The rental will be available from May 2024 for a maximum term of 2 years

We want to attract young married couples with local roots, who are keen to move to Gibraltar and make it their permanent home.

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Applications must be submitted by 31st December 2023 to [hpgibraltar@gmail.com](mailto:hpgibraltar@gmail.com).

For further information, the HPF can be contacted at this email address

## Irreverent Jokes of the Week

### **"Adam and Eve: The Untold Story"**

It is well known that after Adam took a bite from the apple, he felt great shame and covered himself with a fig leaf.

Eve, too, felt shame and covered herself with a fig leaf. What is not as well known is that immediately thereafter, Eve went behind the bush to try on a maple leaf, a sycamore leaf, an oak leaf...

\* \* \*

### **"Adam's Eve-nings"**

In the Garden of Eden, Adam often wandered the fields until late in the evening. One morning, Eve became suspicious. "Why are you always out so late? Are you seeing another woman?" she asked.

"Nonsense," Adam responded. "You're the only woman for me. In fact, you're the only woman on earth."

The quarrel continued until Adam fell asleep, only to be awakened by someone poking him in the chest.

It was Eve.

"What do you think you're doing?" Adam demanded.

"Counting your ribs," said Eve



## 2023 Najalot 5784

<b>22<sup>nd</sup> Tishri</b> <i>Saturday</i> <i>7<sup>th</sup> October</i> <b>Shabbat</b> <b>Yom Tob</b> <b>Shemini Aseret</b>	The Very Reverend Rabbi <b>Judah Azancot</b> Solomon Benoliel de Isaac David Abergel bar Abraham *Juda Murcian *David Hacoen, <i>habahur</i> *Imo shel haguebir Isaac Sananes bar Shelomo <i>R. Hanoch bar Moshe of Cordova, 4775</i>
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> Tishri</b> <i>Sunday</i> <i>8<sup>th</sup> October</i> <b>Yom Tob</b> <b>Simjat Torah</b>	Viuda de Eleazar Serfaty de Abraham Lecicia, madre de Solomon Haim Hassan bar Joshua Viuda de Mordejay Azagury bar Haim Menashe Massias bar Isaac, <i>hamaskil</i> 5758 Jaim Benmergui bar Moshe
<b>24<sup>th</sup> Tishri</b> <i>Monday</i> <i>9<sup>th</sup> October</i>	Simha, madre de Levy Cazes de Joseph Moses Laredo de Isaac, <i>habahur</i> Abraham Benggio bar Joseph, <i>habahur</i> Abraham Benyunes bar Rafael Moses *David Mattana, <i>hayakar</i> Mazal Tob bat Gimol, 5773 Daniella <i>bito shel</i> Abraham Kalman Hacoen bar Nissan 5777
<b>25<sup>th</sup> Tishri</b> <i>Tuesday</i> <i>10<sup>th</sup> October</i>	Judith Nissim Bitton de Nathan Isaac Attias bar Moses <i>R. Moshe Sofer ("Chatam Sofer") 5600</i>
<b>26<sup>th</sup> Tishri</b> <i>Wednesday</i> <i>11<sup>th</sup> October</i>	Samuel Levy de Solomon Moses Hatchwell de Joseph Merima Lengui de Aaron, <i>habetula</i> Eliyahu Belilo de Aaron Miriam Tapiero, madre de Eliyahu
<b>27<sup>th</sup> Tishri</b> <i>Thursday</i> <i>12<sup>th</sup> October</i>	David Mattana de Jacob <i>R. Yischaq bar Shemuel, "R"i HaZaken" of the Tosefot</i>
<b>28<sup>th</sup> Tishri</b> <i>Friday</i> <i>13<sup>th</sup> October</i>	Haim Benishlush bar Solomon, <i>haguebir</i> 5758 Hannah (Anita) madre de Netanel Bendayan
<b>29<sup>th</sup> Tishri</b> <i>Saturday</i> <i>14<sup>th</sup> October</i> <b>Shabbat</b> <b>Bereshith</b>	Rachel, madre de Raphael Joseph Gabay de Joshua Joseph Labos bar Abraham Amram Sananes bar Mesod Yeshaya Benatar bar Yosef 5768 Clara, madre de Shemtob Benmergui

AISH HATORAH'S  
**Shabbat Shalom Weekly**

by R Yitzchak Zweig

# GOOD MORNING!

This upcoming Thursday night, October 5th, begins the seventh and last day of the holiday of Sukkot. This last day of Sukkot is known as Hoshanah Rabbah, a name that means “the great salvation.” On this night many Jews stay up late – or even the entire night – studying Torah.

Hoshanah Rabbah was viewed by the sages as the culmination of the High Holy Days and, in some ways, akin to Yom Kippur. It is the solemn day on which the entire Jewish community is judged by G-d as to whether we are worthy of the seasonal rains. As those in Florida are painfully aware, not all rains are a blessing.

The number seven is very prominent in this holiday – the four species are made up of seven individual pieces: one etrog or citron, one lulav or date palm, three hadassim or myrtle branches, and two aravot or willow branches. It is also a seven-day holiday and on the seventh day there is a selection of seven hoshanot prayers that are recited in morning service in a series of seven hakkafot, or processions, around the sanctuary. In the

times of the Holy Temple, 70 oxen were sacrificed over the holiday as a merit for the 70 nations of the world.

(In Judaism the number seven represents a connection to the physical world. This is self-evident in that there are seven days in a week, seven musical notes, seven distinct colours in a rainbow that are visible to the human eye, seven holes in the human skull, seven continents – the list goes on. Of course, this led to human interpretations as well – the seven seas, seven wonders of the ancient world, etc. Because Sukkot is a holiday so intimately connected to the physical world – we are enjoined to live outside in temporary huts, it is a harvest holiday, and we pray for rain to sustain the world – this holiday is naturally connected to the number seven.)

At the conclusion of the seven processions, a special ritual is conducted in which five branches of the willow (aravot, also referred to as hoshanot) are struck upon the ground. This is a very deep and mystical ritual, and one that we hope might influence G-d's decision to send the seasonal rains.

On Friday evening, following Hoshanah Rabbah, the festival of Shemini Atzeret (the “Eighth Day of Assembly”) begins. While for many Jews Hoshanah Rabbah is the last day one takes the lulav and etrog and dwells in the sukkah, traditional Jews outside of the land of Israel continue to eat their meals in the sukkah through Shemini Atzeret. Outside of Israel we celebrate two days of Yom Tov (holiday), so Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah (“Rejoicing in Torah”) are each celebrated on separate days.

Since only one day of Yom Tov is observed in Israel, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are celebrated concurrently on the same day. This year, outside of Israel they are celebrated on Shabbat and Sunday.

Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah is actually a separate festival that happens to be adjacent to Sukkot, a fact which is lost on many – including myself at one point. Many decades ago, I took a walk on the golf course near my home. Midway through my walk I was called over by one of the elderly groundskeepers who hopped off his riding mower to come talk to me.

I was pretty sure he was going to scold me for walking on the golf course (pedestrians on the paved pathways of the course were not welcome), but as it turned out he was just a little bored and wanted to chat. Seeing that I was an Orthodox Jew, he mentioned to me that he had worked in a synagogue for thirty-five years. At this point I was beginning to get a little bored myself, but what he said next intrigued me:

“I bet that I know more of the Jewish holidays than you do!” I smiled smugly as I thought to myself, “What a fool. There is NO WAY he could possibly know more Jewish holidays than me.”

Seeing my self-assured smile, he challenged me: “Go ahead – name the holidays you know.”

Barely able to keep my eyes from rolling (I was seventeen after all) I began, “Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot...” “Go on” he said to me. I continued, “Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur...” He urged me further, “Keep going.” I then went on to mention the rabbinic

holidays of Chanukah and Purim. “Still missing one!” I looked at him blankly, “Tu biShvat?”

“No!” he said triumphantly. “YOU FORGOT SIMCHAT TORAH!” I looked at him in complete shock – he was absolutely right! Simchat Torah is not part of the Sukkot holiday, a fact that had completely slipped my mind.

I learned two very valuable lessons that day: 1) Never be overconfident in what you think you know, and even more importantly 2) Never underestimate what someone else can teach you – even if your teacher appears to you in the dishevelled and grass-stained clothes of a groundskeeper.

Simchat Torah is a day when we celebrate our relationship with the Torah. All are invited to participate and encouraged to be called up to the Torah – even young children! The evening and again the next morning are filled with dancing and songs rejoicing in the Torah and thanking G-d for the Torah and the privilege of being Jewish. If you only take your kids to synagogue twice a year – one of those times should be Simchat Torah!

Attendees to the celebration in the synagogue literally dance circles around the synagogue – this is known as hakkafot. Everyone has an opportunity to dance with the Torah and there is much joy and merriment; many synagogues break out the booze during the festivities. Which reminds me of the following story:

In a certain small shtetl in Poland, Simchat Torah was celebrated in a legendary manner that included liberal amounts

of drinks. One year the rabbi's wife finally had enough; she prohibited the rabbi from imbibing on the holiday and she made sure that all of the rabbi's adherents were aware of her disallowance.

What were the rabbi's followers to do? They earnestly wanted their rabbi to inspire them with some meaningful message on Simchat Torah and a little "schnapps" (Yiddish for booze) always seemed to help him open up and deliver an inspiring sermon. But the rabbi's wife was watching them with eagle-eyed alertness.

Zalmy, the rabbi's shamash (sexton) had an idea; he went outside and poured 6 oz. of very strong schnapps into 8 oz. of milk. He went back in to the synagogue and handed the rabbi what appeared to be a large glass of milk. The rabbi's wife nodded approvingly.

The rabbi drank it down and his eyes opened very widely. He called over his shamash and asked him to lean down so that he could tell him something. The shamash bent over, eagerly awaiting to hear the rabbi's pearls of wisdom. The rabbi whispered earnestly in his ear:

"Zalmy, whatever you do, don't sell that cow!"

All kidding aside, Simchat Torah is an extremely important holiday; it is the day when we celebrate the Torah and our connection to it.

On Simchat Torah every synagogue in the world completes the yearly cycle of the weekly Torah reading and promptly begins

the next cycle. We read the last Torah portion in Deuteronomy, VeZot HaBracha, and then begin immediately with Bereishit, starting the book of Genesis. Thus, Simchat Torah is a celebration of both completing the Torah and starting it again.

One may wonder, why did our sages see fit to designate a separate day for Simchat Torah? Would not Shavuot, the day we received the Torah, be a more appropriate time for this celebration?

The Talmud instructs a father that as soon as his child is able to speak, he should teach him, “The Torah that Moses commanded us is a heritage to the Congregation of Jacob.” Why is this the verse selected when there are earlier verses in the Torah that convey a similar message (e.g. “This is the Torah that Moses placed before Children of Israel”)?

To address these two questions, I will (very) briefly explain the difference between Shavuot and Simchat Torah. Shavuot is the day when we became betrothed to the Almighty, as it were, and we received the Ten Commandments as a sign of that commitment. This is why the sin of the Golden Calf was so bitterly painful; we had strayed and betrayed our “marital” commitment to the Almighty. This is also why Moses shattered the original tablets when he discovered our infidelity.

As previously mentioned, on Simchat Torah we read the final portion in the Torah known as VeZot HaBracha. It begins with the blessings that Moses gives to the Jewish people and each tribe right before he dies. Then Moses ascends Mt. Nebo where the Almighty shows him all of the land that the Jewish people

are about to inherit. He dies, is buried in the valley in an unknown spot, and the Jewish people mourn for 30 days. The Torah then concludes with the words, “Never again has there arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Almighty had known face to face.”

As long as Moses was alive we had a living connection to the Almighty; someone who could speak directly to Him. If there was ever a question of law, Moses simply asked G-d for clarification. Once Moses died there was no longer a direct link to the Almighty and we, the Jewish people, became the final arbiters of the Torah and what it requires of us.

In other words, on Simchat Torah we celebrate the betrothal of the Torah to the Jewish people (as opposed to Shavuot, when we were betrothed to the Almighty). This is why many of the customs of the holiday are referred to using the word chatan – groom (such as Chatan Torah and Chatan Bereshit). It really is a marriage celebration!

According to our sages, this is hinted to in the verse; “The Torah that Moses commanded us is a heritage to the Congregation of Jacob.” The Hebrew word for heritage is morasha; the sages teach us that word can be read as m’orasa – which means betrothed. After the death of Moses, the Jewish people – as the final arbiters – have an eternal bond of betrothal to the Torah. This truly is something special to celebrate!

A 26-hour candle should be lit on Friday evening before sundown together with the usual Shabbat lights. From this extra candle you will be able to light the Yom Tov candles on Sunday



night and also you will be able to make the beracha of *bore me'ore haEsh* that we say every Saturday night after the departure of Shabbat and on this occasion we say together with the Kiddush of Yom Tob.

'Well done' is better than 'well said'. – *Benjamin Franklin*

**Synagogue Reading:** Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah

**Shemini Asseret: Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17** includes the topics of: tithing crops, remission of loans during the Shemitah year, to be warm-hearted and open handed to the destitute, Jewish bondsman, Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot, and going to Jerusalem for the Shelosh Regalim (the three pilgrimage festivals: Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot) with offering to celebrate the festivals.

**Simhat Torah:** VeZot HaBracha completes the Book of Deuteronomy and thus the whole Torah. This Torah portion begins with the blessing of Moses, right before he dies, for the Jewish people and each tribe. Moses ascends Mt. Nebo and, as mentioned above, he dies and is buried in the valley in an unknown spot. The Jewish people mourn for 30 days. The Torah concludes with the words, "Never again has there arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Almighty had known face to face [...]" and then we start again the yearly cycle of reading the Torah with the reading of Bereshit, Genesis!

# How to Access the Joy of Sukkot

by Emuna Braverman

**Joy comes from taking pleasure in the moment and not dwelling on what's missing.**

The seriousness of the High Holidays has now given way to the joy of Sukkot. It's not just a turn of phrase. The holiday is referred to as the time of our joy! The real challenge is accessing that joy, finding that positive emotion deep within us.

Some of the aspects of the holiday make it easy – we build and decorate the sukkah, we eat festive meals, we acknowledge Gd's omnipresence as we shake the lulav and Etrog... What's not to like?

But nevertheless, joy can remain elusive. There are still a lot of meals to cook (we are having a friendly family competition over who has made the most trips to the grocery store!) and serve and clear. There are still dishes to wash (although the pressure to use paper increases with each passing year). There are still young children to entertain; there is still a home that needs to be kept clean – scratch that, not kept clean but straightened up at the end of the day. There is still a lot of work to do.

Yet, that's really not what interferes with the joy.

It's an attitude. It's what we see. It's how we look at the world and our lives. It's a habit – frequently one that needs to be

changed. Joy comes from taking pleasure in the moment, in the situation of our lives right now – in not focusing on future goals, dreams or aspirations and especially in not dwelling on what’s missing.

This can range from the trivial – Is that bush dead? Why is that broken decoration hanging on the wall? I think the meat is too dry. Oh no, the challah is doughy. The kids are fighting again. Who set the table like that? – to the deeper and more important – I need to get a job and earn some money. I have a job but I want to earn more money. When will I have children? When will I have more children?

The list is endless and I’m only scratching the surface.

**This year, I’m working on appreciating the positive and enjoying the moment, and ignoring the things that are damaged or missing.**

Our challenge is to place all those “needs” (wants? desires?) in the Almighty’s hands where they belong (and where they are anyway) and focus on what we do have – all the good, all the pleasures, all the gifts. All the noise, all the chaos, all the mess...

Sometimes it’s easy – when we’re well-rested (I’m trying to imagine such a scenario), when everyone is getting along, when the house is spotless (now I’m really dreaming), when Jupiter aligns with Mars... and sometimes it’s more challenging – we’re tired, there’s cereal all over the floor, the pasta is bubbling over onto the stove, two grandsons are throwing a ball in the middle of the living room right into the

...oops!, two other grandchildren were wrestling but now one is screaming...And it turns out that bush in the garden really is dead.

That's when it's an accomplishment. That's when it's meaningful. That's when we know we've grown.

Sukkot, the time of our joy; it's a real gift. It's a real opportunity and it would be foolish to mar it by focusing on the negative, by seeing the cracks in the ceiling instead of the whole beautiful house. This year, I'm going to try to lift up, to see and appreciate the positive, to enjoy the family in the moment and to ignore all the (mostly insignificant) things that are damaged or missing. We are outside in the sukkah so we don't have to see it all, and basking in the Almighty's embrace and appreciating that He's in charge of it all.

I'm asking Him to help me stay focused on the good and the joy. And I'm hiring a good floor cleaning company for when the holiday ends...

Daily Lift #119

### **An Attitude of Gratitude**

Do all that you can to express gratitude to others for anything they do for you. This will help you feel gratitude for the Almighty also. Today, think of someone you gain from but have not expressed sufficient gratitude. Make a special effort to express gratitude to that person.

*Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian - Lev Eliyahu, vol.1, p.154; Rabbi Pliskin's  
"Consulting the Wise"*

# Shemini Atzeret: Don't Stop Holding Hands

October 9, 2022 | by Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

**Let's keep unified and refrain from going back to dissension and pettiness.**

Although Shemini Atzeret concludes the holiday of Sukkot, it is, in fact, considered an independent holiday. During Sukkot, sacrifices are brought in the merit of the nations of the world, but on Shemini Atzeret, the sacrifices are exclusively on behalf of the Jewish people.

The midrash compares Shemini Atzeret to a King who hosts all of his children for a party for several days and when the last day comes, he pleads, please stay with me one more day because “your separation is difficult for Me.” This is the classic understanding.

However, there is another phenomenal interpretation. What bothers G-d is not our parting from Him; He will come with us. What bothers Him is the fact that we are separating – that for the last month and a half we have been united, spent quality time together, worked together, celebrated together, focused on our sense of community with a shared destiny, together. And now, the holidays will be behind us and we will go back to the usual divides, focusing on our differences instead of our commonalities, resuming the usual blame, finger pointing, name calling and hyper criticism.

We will go back to our own interests, instead of focusing on community, go back to judging others based on what is on or not on their heads instead of what is in their hearts, go back to worrying about is the community going too far to the right or swinging to the left.

The unity and joy exhibited during the High Holidays and Sukkot were so refreshing, G-d is our divisiveness; it's difficult for Him. It is as if He is saying to us, "Please spend one more day unified and together, transcending these differences and pettiness."

How do spend this one last day, this independent holiday of Shemini Atzeret? We grab hands and dance in a circle, a circle that has no beginning and no end, no hierarchy or tier system, no head of the table or dais, no lead position, just everyone dancing equally in a circle, united, together. There is not one circle for shtreimels, one for black hats, one for kippot serugot and one for those bare-headed. There isn't a circle for the old and one for the young or a circle for the republicans and a circle for the democrats.

One circle, one people, one community, one history and one destiny. That is the enduring image of this Jewish holiday, that is the message we take with us into the dead of winter and beyond.

Don't stop dancing even when Simchat Torah ends. Don't go back to the usual separation. Don't stop holding the hands of the person on your left and your right literally, and metaphorically.

Don't let go of the hands of your family, friends and members of the community. Don't let go of the hands of those who are here, and don't let go of those who are gone. We have felt the presence of our ancestors, our parents and grandparents over these holidays. Our homes have been filled with the aroma and taste of their recipes, we have heard the tunes they sang. They have lived with us these last few weeks and we must not let them go.

Seeing separation and division is hard for G-d and it should be hard for you. Don't let go of those who are gone and don't stop holding the hands of those who are still here.

Daily Lift #54

### **Help Resolve Problems**

If you try to make peace between two people who have been quarrelling, don't take sides and tell one of the people that they are wrong and therefore should be the one to make peace. Since this person thinks that he is right and the other is wrong, he's likely to turn against you and quarrel with you!

A more effective approach is telling him: "Even though you believe you are totally right and the other person is totally wrong, you should still be the one who pursues peace. Take the initiative to approach the other person and apologize to him. Don't wait for him to apologize to you."

Today, think about two people you know who are quarrelling and try using this method to bring peace between them

*Sources: see Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin - Ruach Chaim 1:12*

# Simchat Torah: Just You and Me

by Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld

**Amidst all the dancing and revelry, we realise just how alone we are with G-d.**

Simchat Torah is given a curious description in Torah: “On the eighth day shall be a holy convocation to you... it is a holding back (*atzeret*)” (Lev. 23:36). What is a “holding back?”

The Midrash explains: G-d says to Israel, “I hold you back unto Me.” It is as a king who invites his children to a feast for a number of days. When it is time for them to depart, he says, “My sons, please remain with me one more day. Your departure is difficult for me.” We have just gone through a Rosh Hashanah, a Yom Kippur, and a Sukkot together. I have judged you, forgiven you, and shaded you in My protective Clouds. I don’t want to let you go so soon. Stay for one more day.

There is thus something very intimate about Simchat Torah. After celebrating so many other festive occasions, G-d asks for one last day – just us alone. No special activities – no shofar, no judgment, no sukkah, no lulav. Let’s put it all aside and spend one more today together – just Me and you. The earlier holidays related to all mankind: On the High Holidays G-d judges the entire world. On Sukkot we would bring Temple sacrifices for the well-being of all the nations. But not Simchat Torah. G-d asks for just a little quiet time together. No one else; just the two of us.

How do we celebrate our special day with G-d?



By taking His special gift to the Jewish people – by holding and dancing with His Torah.

But why do we celebrate the Torah on this day? Didn't we receive the Torah on the holiday of Shavuot – which commemorates the Revelation at Mount Sinai? Why the opposite end of the year?

The answer is that we lost the Torah we received on Shavuot. After the Revelation, Moses remained on the mountain for 40 days as G-d taught him the Torah he was to teach the nation. He descended the mountain only to find a fraction of the nation dancing around a Golden Calf – with most of the people indifferent to the tragic affair. Moses smashed the Tablets, annulling our first “marriage” with G-d. We had lost the Torah we had only so recently acquired; we had failed to live up to its ideals.

Moses spent the next 40 days beseeching G-d not to wipe out the nation utterly. He then spent another 40 days on Mount Sinai receiving the Second Tablets. He returned at last on Yom Kippur, when G-d forgave the nation entirely. This is the Torah we celebrate on Simchat Torah.

There are thus two dates in the Jewish calendar on which we celebrate the Torah – Shavuot and Simchat Torah. On Shavuot we celebrate the Torah we had, but lost. Why celebrate what we lost? Because the awe-inspiring event of the Revelation at Sinai was one the world would never forget. G-d descended onto Mount Sinai in all His glory. The world, all of creation stood frozen before G-d's overwhelming presence. And Israel

was terrified, shaken to the core. We begged Moses to act as intermediary between G-d and us, “for who of all flesh hears the voice of the Living G-d speaking from the fire like us and lives?” (Deut. 5:23). It was an overawing experience, one which we as a nation and the world over would never forget.

Today many people celebrate Shavuot by staying up the night of the holiday studying Torah. Who can sleep the night before such an earth-shattering event? But not once on Shavuot do we ask ourselves if we are *keeping* the Torah G-d gave us. For the Torah of Mount Sinai is not the Torah we have today. The Revelation was the greatest national event which ever occurred to us, but it was one we not able to live up to.

### **A Personal Torah**

By contrast, on Simchat Torah we do not celebrate our national receiving of the Torah; we celebrate our personal one. G-d gave us the Second Tablets because He deemed us worthy of receiving them. He had just forgiven us on Yom Kippur and decided to take us anew. And we celebrate by each of us holding close that Torah G-d entrusted us with and dancing with it. And likewise every single member of the synagogue is called up to the Torah for the reading of a section.

Anyone who has experienced dancing in a crowd knows that it is actually a very personal experience. In spite of vast numbers of people surrounding you, you feel very alone. You lose yourself within a great moving mass of people, unaware of the individuals within the group and your location within it.

When we dance on Simchat Torah we celebrate our very

personal connection to the Torah. We at once feel ourselves a part of the great body of Israel, yet at the same time we feel very alone with our G-d. This is not only the Torah of the nation of Israel; it is my own Torah. And each of us holds the Torah and celebrates just what G-d's wisdom means to him personally. For everyone has his or her own perspective on G-d's Torah. Everyone has his story, how the Torah has touched his life and how he has become who he is today.

My grandfather's family came to the United States from the Ukraine in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was one of 11 children in a very traditional family. They settled in Philadelphia. In a story repeated literally 2 million times, the children were sent off to public school and became "Americanised," losing most of their religious observances in the process.

All except for my grandfather. Nearly 100 years ago, a local rabbi convinced *his* father to send his son Abraham to yeshiva in New York. Arriving as a teenager on the original Armistice Day of 1918, he attended what would later become Yeshiva University. He went on to earn rabbinic ordination – as did his son and grandsons after him.

Every one of us has his personal story, how he came to be who he is today and what the Torah means to him. For the Torah is the possession of all of us. No one has the monopoly on G-d's wisdom. It is wisdom we can all study and grow from – and recognise its personal message to us. When we dance on Simchat Torah, we celebrate that we have been cleansed on Yom Kippur. We celebrate that G-d has once again accepted us. And we celebrate that the Torah is once again ours.

# Dancing Can Change Your Life

by Ilan Yitzhak :: September 26, 2023

5 min read

**Sometimes all you need to do is let go and dance.**

Dance transcends all boundaries of culture, religion, language and time. No matter where one drops a pin on the map and on the timeline, one is bound to find some form of dance.

Wherever Jews have gone, they have taken their dance moves with them. From Ancient Israel, to Europe and America, Jews have always rejoiced and celebrated by twirling and jumping. Apart from weddings, the Jewish national dance event par excellence is Simchat Torah. After completing reading the Torah over a year cycle, all types of Jews, young and old, come together to dance with Torah scrolls – often for hours on end. The entire journey of the year culminates in dance and joyous celebration.

Like many things in Jewish life, the seemingly casual act of dancing conceals great meaning and potential power. Indeed, dancing can be a vehicle for self-discovery, therapy, and connection to a hidden spirituality – a readily available tool for a generation mired in self-doubts, anxiety and depression.

In the Bible, the act of dance is often mentioned as a method of expressing gratitude and joy. After the splitting of the Red Sea and the miraculous salvation from the Egyptians in the Exodus story, Miriam and all the Jewish women took with them “timbrel and dances” and sang to G-d.<sup>1</sup>

King David in his victorious march to Jerusalem danced “with all his might before G-d”.<sup>2</sup> The Talmud – one of the most important collections of Jewish text – recounts many stories of distinguished sages breaking out from their serious leadership role to dance for the bride and groom in often ridiculous and comical ways.

Since the late 18th century, dance has become even more of a pronounced feature in Jewish life due to Israel Baal Shem Tov. The Baal Shem Tov was the founder of Hasidism, a revolutionary movement in the Jewish world. The Baal Shem Tov sought to emphasize joy and ecstatic devotion as a central feature of serving G-d. In Hasidism, music and dance are seen as important avenues of worship and religious practice.

The Baal Shem Tov famously said that dancing can be a form of prayer and find its place at the very centre of religious life. Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin, one of the scions of the Hassidic heritage, stated that dance has the ability to lift one up from the earth. He meant not just in a physical sense – as jumping and twirling picks you up from the floor – but in a deeper emotional and spiritual manner. This needs explanation.

In Genesis, the creation of Man is described by G-d taking a mound of earth and blowing life into it, creating the first man. Jewish mysticism explains that this is not merely a physical description of what happened: it is a glimpse into the psychological and emotional make-up of the human being. A person’s innate nature is to be drawn to the earth. Each person has a “heavier” part that naturally gravitates towards the more

lowly, inferior, emotions and habits. In general, man is drawn towards laziness, depression, sadness, despair, and/or being overtaken by physical pleasures. Of course, every person is different – but this is how Judaism understands the universal, prototypical, “man” to be. It takes strength to go against one’s nature – to pick oneself up and elevate one’s emotions to a higher frequency. This is where the act of dance, as Rabbi Shlomo explains, can be a trigger and a catalyst.

By forcing oneself to dance, one can pull oneself up out of one’s own “earthly nature” by literally jumping off the floor itself. The act of dancing has the ability to bring you to true joy and to the discovery of a higher part of yourself.

When we dance and fill ourselves with life and joy, it’s as if we are filling the whole universe with renewed life – lifting it up to a higher frequency. At the very least, by increasing our joy and happiness through dance, we become conduits for positivity that affects the people in our lives.

Dance and music will never leave the panorama of human life. Used in the right way, dance can be an uplifting, purifying and therapeutic way to unlock your latent power. It can even be a spiritual experience that connects you to something higher and bigger than yourself. If you are shy or in a bad mood, you can force yourself to dance, which will get you out of yourself and enable to break through internal barriers that are holding you back. You don’t need a dancing partner to tap into this power. Simply choose a song or a playlist that you love and let go when no one is watching. It’s a very affordable therapeutic experience.

If you want to break free from anxiety and stress, sometimes the best thing to do is to get up and choose to live in joy. The ability to discover this part of yourself might not be so distant. Indeed, the secret may be hidden in your body itself. Simchat Torah itself teaches us this. All the loftiness of Torah study throughout the year culminates in the simplicity of the joy locked inside of yourself, waiting to come out. When the mind is confusing and talking too much, perhaps one needs to let another part of their body do the talking: one's feet.

1. Exodus 15:20

2. Samuel II 6:14

Daily Lift #24

### **Identify Yourself**

Your identity creates you. And you choose your identity. Yes, your childhood, your parent's view of you, the way others have treated you, who you compare yourself with, all have had a part in creating your identity. But it's only because now in the present you have decided to keep the identity you have been influenced to have. And if you haven't made a conscious decision how to view your identity, you are still making a decision, albeit a passive one. You might already view yourself as a happy, joyous person. If so, great. If that's not yet your picture of yourself, it makes sense to start viewing yourself this way now. All you need is one moment of happiness or joy to consider yourself as one.

*Sources: From Rabbi Pliskin's "Happiness", p.95*

# Dancing with the Torah

by Rabbi Yerachmiel Milstein :: 4 min read

## **A true Simchat Torah story.**

He came by my house every six months or so, for a modest contribution to support the immigrant village he helped build in Israel to absorb new arrivals from Russia. His excited, high pitched voice and happy, dancing eyes belied the deep furrows in his brow which were painfully etched by decades of punishment at the hands of the communist authorities for the terrible crime of being an observant Jew in the Soviet Union during the 50's, 60's and early 70's.

It became a ritual. I'd ask the diminutive rabbi if he'd like a bite to eat. He would always counter in his Russian accented Yiddish, "Perhaps, just a glass tea." My wife would serve him a steaming cup of dark orange brew along with a generous slice of home made cake, both of which seemed to help straighten his sagging shoulders just a bit. Trudging door to door for small donations, it had certainly been awhile since his last square meal.

He looked up at me and smiled broadly. "Did you know there was such a thing as a Cantonist Shul?"

I remembered stories I heard as a child which described some of the darkest, but most heroic days in Jewish history.

The Cantonists were Jews who from 1825-1840 were forcibly conscripted into the Russian Czar's army from as early as the age of 10, and obligated to serve for 25 years. The authorities



saw it as a corrective, forced assimilation of stubborn Jews into Russian society. They would be kidnapped from their parents' home, tortured repeatedly until they either accepted Christianity or died of their wounds.

They were starved, beaten and lashed, often with whips fashioned from their own confiscated *tefillin*. In their malnourished states, the open wounds on their chests and backs would turn septic and many boys, who had heroically resisted renouncing their Judaism for months, would either perish or cave in and consent to the show baptism. The Czar would have only reliable Christian Russians defending the motherland.

To avoid this horrific fate, some parents actually had their sons' limbs amputated in the forests at the hands of local blacksmiths, and their sons -- no longer able bodied -- would avoid conscription. Many other children tragically committed suicide rather than convert.

Some 40,000 young Jewish boys were forced into Czar Nicholas' army, and very few emerged alive as practicing Jews.

Even the brave few survivors who secretly maintained their faith and managed to return to their families 25 years later, by and large found themselves shunned as traitors to Judaism.

"The Cantonists actually did have a shul of their own," the rabbi continued. "After all, they had nowhere else to go.

"My grandfather told me that he once attended the Cantonist Shul on Simchat Torah. The Cantonists could dance like Cossacks. They were huge, strong men, and the heavy Torah scrolls would seem like toothpicks in their arms. They effortlessly danced on for hours on end. Although they were looked down upon by other Jews, and they were not very learned and really couldn't observe the Torah properly, they were nonetheless able to rejoice in their Judaism and celebrate the Torah. It was truly amazing."

He paused long enough to dip a sugar cube into the still hot tea cup, placed the cube in his mouth and swallowed another long swig of the tea.

"Then for the final *hakafah* (circuit around the synagogue's central lectern), the Cantonists, as if on cue, suddenly removed their shirts in unison! With the Torahs held tightly to their bare skin which was covered with the ugliest welts and scars you ever saw, they danced around even more energetically. Their smiles were now giving way to streams of tears as they looked out into the crowd of assembled Jews, as if to say, 'You may have studied and observed this Torah, but we gave our bodies and our lives for it. The Torah is at least as much ours as it is yours!'"

As he put the tea cup down, he couldn't hide the tremor in his hand which caused a rattled meeting of cup to saucer.

Wiping away a tear with his napkin, he said, "In democratic America it is so easy. Yet so many say, 'It's so hard.' Go figure."

## Four Species Salad for Sukkot

Inspired by the Lulav and Etrog we have this symbolic salad.

By Tamar Lea Hazout

The Jewish month of *Tishrei* (which usually falls between September and October) features many traditional foods, from honeyed apples to pomegranates, to leek patties and kreplach; the year starts with tasty and sweet dishes.

On Sukkot we eat outside in the Sukkah and we shake the lulav and etrog, also called the *Arba minim* which translates to four species. These plant parts are shaken together every day of Sukkot, except for Shabbat.

Recently my friend Sara Cross asked me, "What if there were an *arba minim* salad?" And with that question this salad was born.

### **Constructing the salad**

#### ***Etrog***

The *etrog* is a type of citrus fruit. In a sense it's the bumpy grandfather of the lemon, as it is "one of the oldest cultivated citrus plants," according to Jeff Spurrier's 2013 LA Times article "Growing the *etrog* citron, a tree full of symbolism." The midrash Vayikra Rabba 30:12 says this fruit has both taste and smell and can therefore be compared to Jews with both good deeds and Torah knowledge.

There are two reasons why I will not use an actual etrog for this recipe. One, *etrogim* are expensive. Two, most of the

*etrogim* sold today are not safe for consumption; this is because the biblical commandment calls for the “the fruit of a beautiful tree.” Since the beauty of the fruit is the most important part of the *etrog*, more important than even the taste, the trees are sprayed with lots of chemicals to keep bugs from ruining the fruits.

One may wonder how this is possible when so many people make *etrog* jam, but that’s the topic of another recipe, at another time. To me the obvious equivalent for my salad is lemon juice.

### ***Lulav***

The *lulav* is a long, green and closed branch of a date palm. According to the midrash I mentioned before, the date palm “has taste and has no smell,” which symbolizes Jews who “have good deeds but do not have Torah.” (Midrash Vayikra Rabba 30:12). I chose canned hearts of palm and date syrup for sweetness, to represent the *lulav*.

### ***Hadassim***

The *midrash* continues that myrtle branches, or in Hebrew *hadassim*, have no taste but have a good smell. Jews who are like the *hadassim* have lots of Torah knowledge but no good deeds. I figured thyme would work as a substitute. In fact, it looks like a miniature version of the real deal. Although most of the myrtle is edible, I haven’t seen these parts in grocery stores. Thyme does have some taste, although it is mild. Rosemary could work too but it has a stronger taste.

## **Willows a.k.a. *Aravot***

The aravot are willow branches without taste or smell that the *midrash* says represent Jews that have neither Torah nor good deeds. Bundled into the *arbat haminim* with the aforementioned plants, the aravot show how important unity is among the Jewish people. Without them the blessing over the *arbat haminim* can't be recited. Arugula salad will act as a stand-in in my recipe, as it is of similar shape, and doesn't have a strong smell or taste. Baby spinach could be used too if arugula is not available.

### **Ingredients: Servings 4**

- 1 14 oz can hearts of palm
- ½ tablespoon silan date syrup
- 2 cups arugula
- Handful cherry tomatoes optional
- 1 ½ tablespoon lemon juice fresh pressed if possible
- 3 small stems fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ¼ tablespoon salt or more to taste
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

### **Instructions**

Drain and cut the heart of palm into bite-sized pieces.

Wash thyme and remove leaves from stems.

In a medium-sized bowl mix the silan and lemon juice until combined. Add olive oil, salt, and thyme. Mix well.

Wash and dry the arugula. Add the arugula and the hearts of palm to the bowl and toss all ingredients together. Enjoy!

## Ladies' Arrangements

If you cannot make contact with the person detailed below, then please call Mrs Sharon Benggio on 5401 8404.

to The Mikveh will be open an hour before nightfall until half an hour after nightfall by appointment only. Please book three days in advance.

**If you are delayed, please inform the relevant lady as soon as possible.**

For Fridays	call Mrs Sharon Benggio	5401 8404
Saturdays	Mrs Chedva Lebowits	5403 4304
Sundays	Mrs Tova Cohen	5400 8009
	or Mrs Hilda Levy	5728 2000
Mondays	Mrs Ruth Beniso	5401 9313
Tuesdays	Mrs Sharon Benggio	5401 8404
Wednesdays	Mrs Sharon Benggio	5401 8404
Thursdays	Mrs Gail Hassan	5401 4353

Mikva at the top of Georges Lane – Entrance on Town Range.

Telephone at Mikveh: 200 72052.

~\*~

For the Torremolinos mikvah call Rabanit Mimi Amselem on  
+34 653404326

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October **Hoshana Rabba**

Lighting for Shabbat, Yom Tov: 7.38 p.m.

Minja 7.40 p.m.

**Shabbat Shemini Aseret, 22nd Tishri**

Arbit 8.00 p.m.

*Hakafot in K. K. Ets Hayim*

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October

Shjarit 9.00 am

*(Shema before 10.18 a.m.)*

*Hakafot in K. K. Abudarham*

Minjah 6.45 p.m.

Shaar Hashamayim 7.20 p.m.

**Motsa'e Shabbat, Simjat Torah**

'Arvit 8.25 p.m.

Lighting not before 8.35 p.m.

*Hakafot in K. K. Shaar Hashamayim*

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October

Shjarit 9.00 a.m.

*Nefusot Yehuda minha 6.30 pm Hakafot 7*

Minja Sh. Hashamayim 7.30 p.m.

'Arvit 8.25 p.m.

Yom Tob ends 8.34 p.m.

**Week commencing Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October**

KK Abudarham Turno in Nefusot Yehuda

Tefilla Monday, Thursday 7.20, 8.30 a.m.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 7.30, 8.30 a.m.

Minha 7.35 p.m. Arbit 7.55 p.m.

Misva Times	Sat 7 <sup>th</sup> October	Sun 8 <sup>th</sup> October	Mon 9 <sup>th</sup> October	Tue 10 <sup>th</sup> October	Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> October	Thu 12 <sup>th</sup> October	Fri 13 <sup>th</sup> October
	כב תשרי	כג תשרי	כד תשרי	כה תשרי	כו תשרי	כז תשרי	כח תשרי
Dawn	6.55 a.m.	6.56	6.57	6.58	6.59	7.00	7.01
Earliest talet	7.35 am	7.35	7.36	7.37	7.38	7.39	7.40
Sunrise	8.21 am	8.22	8.23	8.24	8.24	8.25	8.26
Latest shema	10.18 am	10.19	10.19	10.20	10.20	10.21	10.21
Midday/night	2.09	2.09	2.08	2.08	2.08	2.08	2.07
Earliest minja	2.44 pm	2.44	2.43	2.43	2.43	2.42	2.42
Minha Ketana	5.32 p.m.	5.31	5.30	5.29	5.28	5.27	5.26
Peleg haMinja	7.05 pm	7.04	7.03	7.01	7.01	7.00	6.59
Sunset	7.57 pm	7.56	7.54	7.53	7.51	7.50	7.49
Nightfall	8.30 pm	8.29	8.28	8.26	8.25	8.24	8.23
Daf קדושין	נה	נו	נז	נח	נט	ס	סא

*Pekidat shenata of the late*

Fibi BenDavid ע"ה

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October**

minha 7.35 p.m. in KK Nefusot Yehuda followed by mishmara

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October**

tefilla 7.30 a.m. in Nefusot Yehuda followed by service at graveside.