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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON SIMCHAS TORAH - 5785

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SIMCHAS TORAH

from: Ira **Zlotowitz** <Iraz@klalgovoah.org>
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subject: **Tidbits - Shemini Atzeres 5785**
In Memory of Rav Meir Zlotowitz ZT"L
HOSHANA RABBAH

On Leil Hoshana Rabbah, there is a custom to stay up late, for some, throughout the night, to learn Torah and daven. Many gather in shul to lein Mishneh Torah (the entire Sefer Devarim) • Hoshana Rabbah is an auspicious day - the final chance to influence the divine judgment of the Yomim Nora'im. It is customary to wish one another Ah Gut Kvittel or Piska Tava, referring to inserting a good note into the final judgment • During Shacharis, the Pesukei D'Zimra of Shabbos is said, with the addition of Mizmor Lesoda, and the exclusion of Nishmas. The Shliach Tzibbur wears a kittel • Many have the minhag to remove the upper rings from the lulav. Some do this even before reciting the berachos on the lulav, others before Hallel and some before Hoshanos • Seven hakafos of Hoshanos are performed, encircling the Sifrei Torah held at the bimah. Following hakafos, there is a Minhag Nevi'im of Chibbut Aravos, to klapp (bang) a bundle of five aravos on the ground. There is no need to bang any leaves off. Women should recite some of the hoshanos and perform Chibbut Aravos. Some shake the bundle to the six directions (like the lulav) prior to banging them. It is permissible to reuse a set of Aravos, provided that some leaves remain • As Hoshana Rabbah is a Yom Tov, one should have a proper Yom Tov meal. Since it is also Erev Yom Tov (Shemini Atzeres), the meal should be held before tesha sha'os (the end of the 9th halachic hour of the day, approximately 3:20 PM in NYC). Many have the custom to eat kreplach during this meal • The final opportunity for reciting Tashlich is on Hoshana Rabbah.

An Eruv Tavshilin is made on Wednesday, Erev Yom Tov as the second day of Yom Tov is Erev Shabbos. An Eruv Tavshilin enables cooking and other preparations for Shabbos to take place on Friday while it is still Yom Tov • Yizkor is said on Shemini Atzeres. For those who have the custom, a Ner Neshamah should be lit on Erev Yom Tov. Additionally, as a new fire may not be lit on Yom Tov, a two-day candle is commonly lit to have a source for Hadlakas Neiros on the second night and Erev Shabbos as well as for other permitted Yom Tov uses.

Daf Yomi - Thursday: Bavli: Bava Basra 120 • Yerushalmi: Orlah 35 • Mishnah Yomis: Bava Metzia 8:1-2 • Oraysa - Next week: Beitza 15a-17a. Be sure to show appreciation for all those who helped prepare for Yom Tov. Also, one should take the opportunity on Erev Yom Tov to call one's parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rebbe to wish them a Gut Kvittel and Chag Sameach.

SHMINI ATZERES

One may not prepare on Shemini Atzeres for the night of Simchas Torah. As such, preparations for this second night of Yom Tov may not begin until nightfall (tzeis hakochavim) • Preparations may be conducted on Friday, Simchas Torah, for Shabbos, based on the Eruv Tavshilin prepared on Erev Yom Tov.

Shehecheyanu is recited on Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah. One who inadvertently said "Chag HaSuccos" instead of "Yom HaShemini Chag HaAtzeres" in Shemoneh Esrei or in Bircas Hamazon need not repeat it. Yizkor is recited following Kerias Hatorah • Some (Nusach Sefard) have the minhag to hold an abridged hakafos on Leil Shemini Atzeres • There are different opinions regarding eating in the succah. Regardless, the berachah of Leisheiv is not said and the stringency of limiting all eating (non-mezonos) to the succah is relaxed. The prevalent minhag is not to sleep in the succah • For the seudos, honey and round challoos are used for the final time on Shemini Atzeres • Some are stringent and discourage marital relations on Leil Shemini Atzeres except for a leil tevilah (many extend this to Hoshana Rabbah and Simchas Torah as well) • A tefillah of Yetziah Min HaSuccah is said on Shemini Atzeres afternoon

Tefillas Geshem. We begin saying Mashiv Haruach u'Morid HaGesheim during Mussaf on Shemini Atzeres. In a shul where the Gabbai announces "Mashiv Haruach u'Morid HaGesheim" before the silent Shemoneh Esrei (the minhag amongst Nusach Ashkenaz), an individual must say it in his quiet Shemoneh Esrei (even though the Sheliach Tzibbur has not yet said Tefilas Geshem). If the Gabbai makes no such announcement (i.e., a Nusach Sefard Shul) an individual does not say Mashiv Haruach. One who forgets Mashiv Haruach, and also does not say Morid Hatal (i.e., Nusach Ashkenaz) needs to repeat Shemoneh Esrei. If one realizes his error before beginning "Atah Kadosh," he may immediately say "Mashiv Haruach..." and continue "Atah Kadosh" etc. If one is unsure if he said the correct formula, for the first 90 Tefillos we assume he followed what he was accustomed to and did not say Mashiv Haruach (the 90th tefillah will be Maariv on Wednesday, November 20th). If one repeats the phrase "Mechayei meisim attah rav l'hoshia mashiv haruach u'morid hageshem" 90 times, he is halachically presumed to be accustomed to saying it properly and therefore would not repeat if unsure.

LeDavid is recited on Shemini Atzeres for the final time.

SIMCHAS TORAH

Bircas Kohanim takes place during Shacharis instead of Mussaf (Ribbono Shel Olam and Yehi Ratzon are omitted). If one is given the opportunity to hold a Sefer Torah during hakafos it is considered disrespectful to decline this honor. However, after holding the Sefer for a bit one may give over the opportunity to another person. Since it is also Erev Shabbos, the meal should begin before tesha sha'os (the end of the 9th halachic hour of the day, approximately 3:20 PM in NYC). Otherwise one should eat less in order to have a proper appetite for the seudah on Friday night.

KIBBUDIM:

Many shuls auction these honors.

Evening Hakafos: Atah Hareisa, Chazzanus [and Neiros] at the Hakafos, Pesicha, Hotza'ah V'Hachnasa, 3 or 5 Aliyos, Hagbahah/Gelilah.

Daytime Hakafos: - Atah Hareisa, Chazzanus and Neiros at the Hakafos, 4 Aliyos, 5th Aliyah - Kol Hane'arim, Chasan Torah (the final aliyah in Sefer Devarim), Chasan Bereishis (the aliyah which begins Sefer Bereishis), Maftir, Hagbahah and Gelilah for each of the three Sifrei Torah.

The aliyah of Chasan Torah is considered by many to be the most prestigious, with the Chasan Bereishis second in prestige. Many value Kol Hane'arim as a segulah to have children. For these three aliyos, in many

shuls everyone gathers around the bimah and talleisim are spread over those assembled. In many shuls Hamalach hagoel is said after the aliyah of Kol Hane'arim. The minhag is for every person to receive an aliyah (minimum age of oleh varies based on individual shul policy) before the official five aliyos and Chasanei Torah and Bereishis are leined.

KERIAS HATORAH

Shemini Atzeres: Five aliyos are leined from Devarim (14:22-16:17) that discusses the Yamim Tovim. Maftir is the korbanos of the day (Bamidar 29:35-30:1). The haftarah describes the berachos that Shlomo Hamelech blessed the nation with at the culmination of the Chanukas Habayis of the first Beis Hamikdash (Melachim Alef 8:54-9:1). This took place on Shemini Atzeres.

Simchas Torah: At night, three (or five) aliyos are leined from Parashas V'zos Haberachah. During the day, we lein Parashas V'zos Haberachah in six aliyos, completing Chamishei Chumshei Torah. We then begin the Torah anew, by leining one aliyah from the beginning of Bereishis (1:1-2:3). Maftir is the korbanos of the day (Bamidar 29:35-30:1). The haftarah is the beginning of Sefer Yehoshua (1:1-18). After leining of Moshe Rabbeinu's passing in Parashas V'zos Haberachah, we continue describing his disciple, Yehoshua, and his rise to leadership. With every sunset, Klal Yisrael recognizes the dawn of its divine appointed leader.

V'ZOS HABERACHAH: Moshe Rabbeinu blesses each Shevet individually • Blessings for Bnei Yisrael as a whole • Hashem shows Moshe the land from afar • Moshe Rabbeinu's passing; his burial place remains unknown • Klal Yisrael mourns for thirty days • Moshe's greatness and supremacy in prophecy • Chazak! Chazak! Venis'chazeik!

BEREISHIS: The Seven Days of Creation. Day 1 - the world, starting with light (day and night) • Day 2 - the sky, separation of waters • Day 3 - earth and seas, vegetation, and seeds • Day 4 - sun, moon and stars • Day 5 - fish and birds • Day 6 - animals of the land, Adam (and Chavah) • Day 7 - blessed and holy rest

ISRU CHAG

An abridged Kabbalas Shabbos is recited on Friday evening (some have the custom to make "early Shabbos" as recommended by the Mishnah Berurah when an Eruv Tavshilin permitted preparations for Shabbos)

Av Harachamim and Tzidkascha are not said on Isru Chag. Some do not say Tachanun until after Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan.

Following a Yom Tov when carrying is allowed, one should check the pockets of his Shabbos clothing to avoid carrying inadvertently on Shabbos.

FROM THE YOM TOV TABLE

The Rambam writes that, aside from a person's responsibility for his own Simchas Yom Tov, he must ensure the Simchas Yom Tov of his wife and children. Furthermore, the Rambam writes one that must ensure the Simchas Yom Tov of the needy such as widows and orphans as well (Hilchos Yom Tov 6:18). The Rambam writes further: "But someone who locks the doors of their house, eating and drinking with their children and spouse [alone], and doesn't provide food or drink to the poor and depressed, is not participating in the joy of Hashem's commandments but rather the joy of his stomach, and about them it says, "their sacrifices are like bread for the dead; all who eat of them will become impure, for their food is for themselves" (Hoshea 9:4)"

As the Rambam writes this Halacha as part of the laws of Yom Tov, and not as part of Hilchos Tzedakah, it is clear that one fails to fulfill his personal Simchas Yom Tov obligation by falling short in donating to the poor! How so? Additionally, what is the meaning of the Rambam's comparison of selfish indulgence to sacrificing flawed Korbanos?

Rav Yitzchok Feigelstock zt"l explains that the Simcha of Yom Tov celebrates our closeness and unique relationship with Hashem which is derived from a person being a part of Am Yisrael. Therefore, celebrating isn't possible as an individual, rather only as a nation in its entirety. We must ensure the celebration of those around us to properly fulfill this mitzvah. Furthermore, the concept of a korban is that one is coming closer to Hashem and it is as if one is sacrificing himself. If a donor is unfit and fails to seek to come closer to Hashem, the korban is mere food and lacks its holy essence.

So too, if the Simchas Yom Tov lacks its essence, a unified celebration together with Hashem's nation, it is mere frivolity and not a holy celebration of unity. Shemini Atzeres is the climax of Succos and the season of Z'man Simchaseinu. The simcha is complete when we celebrate b'achdus and show how special we are as a nation and our pride in our endearment to Hashem. Please reach out to us with any thoughts or comments at: klalgovoah.org
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www.mishpacha.com/doubling-down-on-simchas-torah/

Doubling Down on Simchas Torah

By Rabbi Moshe Hauer

October 13, 2024

How shall we celebrate this Simchas Torah? Halachah does not allow us to mourn on Yom Tov, but — given what happened last year and since — can our observance of this day remain unchanged? While we cannot allow the attacks to suspend Jewish life, and Simchas Torah's joyous acknowledgment of the gift of Torah remains an invaluable source of inspiration for us from year to year, how can we possibly conduct our festivities as usual?

Let us sharpen the question. This Simchas Torah, there will be two kinds of Jews — those for whom celebration will require enormous willpower, gevuras hanefesh, and those for whom it will be relatively easy.

For the residents of the Gaza Envelope and Sderot, the families of hostages and of soldiers who have been on the front lines all year, and for many others, the celebration of Simchas Torah will inevitably stir up feelings of deep grief and distress. But many of them will nevertheless engage in yet another act of heroism as they find a place for those feelings while celebrating the Yom Tov l'Sheim Shamayim. Their achievement will be celebrating an apparently normal Simchas Torah when everything else in their lives has changed after October 7.

But what about the rest of us? For those who have been largely insulated from the depth of the tragedy, who have experienced it via news reports, calls with relatives, and solidarity visits, but not deeply and personally, al besareinu, the task is entirely different. Though we have been deeply concerned and engaged in tefillah and acts of tzedakah and chesed, we have lived more or less as usual despite the ongoing war.

If we are honest with ourselves, dancing and celebrating Simchas Torah will be less of a struggle than it should be, and it may reinforce our distance from those on the front lines, acheinu hanesunim b'tzarah uv'shivyah. It is we who must ask ourselves — can we possibly continue as usual? How can we celebrate this Simchas Torah in a way that does not gloss over the experience of this past year?

The answer lies in those hakafos themselves, in the conscious effort we invest to "lean in" and make the hakafos serve not as an escape but as the means to connect deeply to the events and challenges of this past year, bringing to life the feelings and ideals that we most need to strengthen. Ideals are usually not powerful enough to traverse the transformative distance between the head and the heart. For that, we must engage our emotions, and one of the most effective ways to achieve that is via the vehicle of niggun, repeatedly singing together with others a phrase or a sentence that expresses a core ideal until it becomes a part of us.

Here are two of the core ideals that we can reinforce as we celebrate Simchas Torah in the shadows of the past year.

The Circle of Connection

Throughout Succos, we form human circles — whether for the hoshanos, for the celebration of Simchas Beis Hashoeivah, or for the ultimate celebration of Simchas Torah hakafos.

The Netziv (Ha'amek Davar, Devarim 16:15) suggested that this practice fulfills the Torah's description of Succos as chag, a term that can mean both "festival" and "circle" (see Chagigah 10b).

The circle of dance is central to this festival of asif (ingathering) that is rich with allusions to the unity of all types of Jews (the arba minim bound together, the shared dance of the tzaddikim and baalei teshuvah at the Simchas Beis Hashoeivah) and that brought together the Jewish People in

Yerushalayim k'ish echad for the climactic aliyah l'regel. The circle unites all its points, with no beginning and no end and with all equidistant from the center. Thus, a joyous circle of dance tangibly fosters a sense of connection to all who join it.

Who should be part of that circle of connection? Succos is the Yom Tov of invisible guests, the Ushpizin. This Simchas Torah we can consciously, explicitly, and conceptually broaden the orbit of our dance, figuratively inviting into the circle those physically and ideologically far from us whose lives were upended by the massacre of last Simchas Torah and its aftermath. We can dance “V'shavu Vanim L'gvulam” with the families of the hostages and the displaced; “Hoshia es Amecha” and “Tzaveh Yeshuos Yaakov” with the soldiers and their families; and “Hinei Mah Tov” with those from whom we are religiously and politically distant.

We can also pause the dancing for a bit and sit in a kumzitz circle to express our concern for acheinu kol beis Yisrael, our awareness of the chronic anti-Semitism of vehi she'amdah, and our ani maamin that all this will culminate b'vias haMashiach.

Rather than escaping October 7 with platitudes of “we cannot let the terrorists take away our Simchas Torah,” these circles of song and dance will become the means for us to strengthen and deepen our connection to those on the front lines and to events and experiences from which we may be otherwise somewhat detached.

The Light of Torah

There have been incalculable human and national costs resulting from the massacre of last Simchas Torah and its aftermath, including death, captivity, injury, destruction, displacement, and an elevated sense of danger for Jews everywhere.

But these constitute only one part of the tragedy. Chazal (Sanhedrin103b, 110a) record Hashem's reproach of Klal Yisrael when we limit our concern to the damage inflicted upon ourselves and are insufficiently troubled by the damage done to Hashem's honor. Lichvodchem mechisem, lichvodi lo mechisem.

Klal Yisrael is a community of values. Our mission since Avraham has been to be mekadesh Sheim Shamayim in the world by teaching and modeling both faith in Hashem and halichah b'drachav, applying Hashem's middos in our own interactions with other. That continues to this day, as despite the centuries of persecution, the Holocaust, and the constant existential treats we face, we refuse to turn bitterly inward and remain committed to being a source of brachah for the world.

Nevertheless, the twisted narrative promoted in academia, the media, progressive spaces, and international governmental and judicial forums, has cast the Jewish People everywhere and our moral and holy army of selfless soldiers as genocidal, oppressive, and hateful, radically increasing the physical threats of anti-Semitic violence facing Jews everywhere, but — even more perniciously — reducing our ability to achieve our core mission of being mekadesh Sheim Shamayim, even making many Jews feel the need to hide their Jewish identity.

Simchas Torah, the day this nightmare began, is when we rejoice in our truth and morality and in the gift of Hashem's Torah. Carrying our children on our shoulders and sifrei Torah in our arms, we sing and dance in joyous celebration of Torah, emunah, and mesorah, and the values that define us. The words — the value statements — that we sing repeatedly express our deep appreciation for our good fortune to continue the mission of Klal Yisrael to do good, to be good, to study and live by Hashem's word, and to bring light to the world.

Toras Hashem temimah, meshivas nafesh — Hashem's Torah is perfect, restoring the soul. Baruch Hu Elokeinu she'bera'anu lichvodo v'hivdilanu min hato'im — Blessed is our G-d Who created us to bring Him honor, distinguishing us from those who are ethically lost. That is our response to those who speak in the name of justice, humanitarianism, and civil rights while denying the morality of Klal Yisrael.

We remind ourselves of who we are as we sing with the Torah, dance with the Torah, and conclude the reading of the Torah, only to immediately begin

it again, demonstrating that we are the nation defined by our relationship to the Torah and its eternal truths.

So how shall we celebrate Simchas Torah this year? We will not ignore this past year for even a moment. Instead, we will deepen our appreciation for acheinu kol beis Yisrael, the heroes on the front lines and those whose lives have been upended, and our feeling of privilege — ashreinu, mah tov chelkeinu — for having been given the incomparable gift of Torah. We will draw strength from who we are as a nation, from the care that we provide each other, and from living the Torah's values. Utzu eitzah v'sufar dabru davar v'lom yakum, ki imanu Keil.

Rabbi Moshe Hauer serves as the executive vice president of the Orthodox Union.

from: **Rabbi Efreim Goldberg** <reg@brsonline.org>

date: Oct 22, 2024, 2:58 PM

Towards a Mindful and Meaningful Jewish Life

Simchas Torah One Year Later, Breishis Writeup, and More. .

October 21, 2024 י"ט תשרי ה' אלפים תשפ"ה

Simchas Torah One Year Later: A Day of Death, an Opportunity for Rebirth
By Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

Simchas Torah, October 7, will forever be etched in our hearts and minds as the day of the greatest massacre of our people since the Holocaust. The brutal, cold-blooded murder of innocent men, women and children, young and old, entire families, over 1,200 people, rocked our worlds, broke our hearts, and shattered our collective illusion of safety. The events of that day launched a war in which our people have sustained even more casualties, more parents bereft of children, children orphaned from parents. For over a year, we have been a nation in a perpetual state of grief, mourning, and sorrow.

Any look back at a year ago, and all the days since then, begins with honoring the memory of the fallen, learning each of their unique and individual stories, gaining an appreciation for who and what was taken from us. Simchas Torah, heretofore one of the happiest and most joyful days on our calendar, is now forever complicated by the competing feelings of sadness and loss.

Additionally, beyond the unimaginable loss of life, on Simchas Torah a year ago, many of our ideas and assumptions died as well. We lost more than 1,200 irreplaceable lives, but we also lost our innocence, in some cases our confidence, our optimistic view of the Jewish condition in America and the world, and for some, communities of association or identification. A year ago, so much died.

But a year later, as we reflect, we can look back and see that on Simchas Torah, October 7 of last year, so much was also born. On the brink of a civil war over judicial reform and religious differences, overnight a sense of unity, togetherness, and shared destiny was reborn.

From the resolve of the devastated communities on the Gaza border, driven by displaced families from the north and the south, powered by a record response to the IDF call up, the Am HaNetzach, the determined, tenacious nation of eternity was reborn. From the ashes of the Gaza communities, an unprecedented chesed effort to provide for chayalim, support families of reservists, comfort mourners, visit displaced families and provide provisions was born, with leadership and participation from diverse communities literally around the world.

A spiritual awakening, a Jewish pride burst forth in people who had never experienced their Jewish soul before or in whom it had been dormant for a long time. Throughout this year, I have regularly been “bageled,” approached by Jews simply signaling their Jewishness to a fellow Jew (and signaling their desire to signal that Jewishness) in airports and on airplanes, in supermarkets and at stores, at a baseball game and even in a bathroom. Jews are returning to study, practice, proudly display their identity. The Jewish people are alive, reborn, proud, practicing, growing and united.

To be sure, things are far from perfect. There are important differences and disagreements and there are forces seeking to divide us again. The war

continues to rage, our heroic soldiers are still fighting on multiple fronts, and our precious hostages are still not home.

But with all the problems and challenges, with all the lives that were prematurely and tragically snuffed out, so much has come alive. Moshe Naaman, a soldier in the IDF, wrote the following inspiring story (Translated from Hebrew):

Two weeks ago, we were called up by Order 8 to the northern border. Today, we had the privilege of holding Yom Kippur prayers at Kibbutz Beit Zera. For 93 years, the kibbutz existed without agreeing to have a Yom Kippur minyan. But we, as soldiers, set one up in the company area at the kibbutz.

There were 12 religious soldiers among us. We sent a casual WhatsApp invitation to the kibbutz members. When the holiday started, we were shocked—dozens of members came for Kol Nidrei and Maariv. In the morning, elderly members came for Yizkor. The climax came with many dozens of people, including children, women, and toddlers, arriving for Neilah and shofar. People were moved to tears.

What can I say? I never imagined this would happen. The verse “Master of Wars, Sower of Righteousness” took on a new meaning for me today. Two weeks ago, I never imagined I wouldn’t be in the beit midrash for the High Holidays. I found myself as the shofar blower, gabbai, cantor, and speaker... The members kept thanking us after Yom Kippur and tearfully asked us to return next year...

Last year, I had tears of pain and sorrow at the end of Yom Kippur, but this year, those tears turned into excitement and joy.

“And seal all Your people for a good life.”

Moshe Naaman - 5035 גדוד הבוקע

To mark the year since October 7, Danny Wise of Ami Magazine conducted 38 interviews focusing on the rebuilding efforts of the Israeli communities in the Gaza envelope. Among his interviews, he met with a woman named Dafnah from Kibbutz Re'im. She had been the cultural director of the kibbutz and was one of the organizers of the Nova Festival.

Touring the kibbutz, she showed him her charred house and the room in which her mother and children, Shira and Meir, were found murdered together. She is the lone survivor of her family. Wise writes that throughout the conversation he thought of Kristallnacht and the destroyed shuls. He asked her if the terrorists destroyed any shuls in the communities along the Gaza envelope.

Dafnah responded, "Of course not. Not a single beit kneset was damaged in all 21 Gaza kibbutzim." Wise didn't understand, how could no shul have been attacked, no Sefer Torah burned? She explained, "It wasn't a miracle. How could they damage something that doesn't exist?" Most of the communities didn't have designated or active shuls. Dafnah, went on to explain, "If you want to understand the day after, you have to understand the day before."

Wise writes:

Rabbi Shlomo Raanan runs an organization called Ayelet Hashachar which seeks to bring outreach to irreligious kibbutzim. He came up with the idea of a basketball game between yeshiva bachurim and the kibbutzniks of Reim. The game was set to take place on Chol Hamoed, October 2, just days before the massacre. Dafnah had led the charge to cancel the game. To her, the match wasn't just a friendly contest; it was a Trojan horse, a way for religious influence to creep into the kibbutz. "I was furious," she told me. "This was outrageous. We didn't need outsiders telling us who a good Jew is," she said, pulling out her phone and scrolling through old messages. She showed me the texts she had sent to Rabbi Raanan, warning him not to bring his religious mission to her doorstep. "Cancel this game immediately," she wrote. "If you don't, we'll all block the entrance with our bodies." In the spirit of peace, Rabbi Raanan canceled the game.

But five days later, the massacre came. Just over the border, in the tunnels of Gaza, Dafna found herself held hostage, face to face with the forces that had torn her world apart. "I said to an older guard in Arabic, why do you torture me? For 20 years, I've made programs for Arab and Jewish. The Jews are

your cousins." As she pleaded in the darkness for some recognition of their shared humanity, she was met not with empathy but with a cold dismissal.

"You are not a descendent of Ibrahim! You are not a Jew!" he spat. "You are a European colonialist who stole our land! It was in that moment, Dafnah said, that something broke. Or perhaps, something began to be repaired. The accusation hit hard. Like many in the kibbutz movement, Dafnah had spent her life defining herself more as an Israeli than a Jew, and more dedicated to reconciling Arabs and Israelis than healing the divides between different groups of Jews.

Religion had always been secondary to her identity. But now, in the depths of that tunnel, being denied her Jewishness by a Hamas fighter, she experienced a crisis of self. "I started screaming, Ana Yahudiun, Ana Yahudiun, I am a Jew I am a Jew!" The guards restrained her, taping her mouth. But for Dafnah, the internal shift had already occurred. "For the first time in my life I saw my soul; I saw that I am a Jew. "All my life," Dafnah reflected, "I've been part of this community. We didn't see ourselves as Jews, in the traditional sense. When I traveled overseas and someone asked if I was Jewish, I'd correct them. "No, I'm Israeli"; I'd say.

But when he called me a colonialist, it hit me. He didn't see me as a Jew because I didn't see myself as a Jew.

Dafnah paused for a moment, her eyes wandering over the ruined landscape. "Every Arab village has a mosque. Christian settlements build churches. And here, we have nothing. Nothing to say that we are Jews. And in that moment, realized that if we were going to rebuild, we needed to reclaim our identity."

"I will tell you," Dafnah said, "I took upon myself the new beit kneset project. When we rebuild, our beit kneset will be the most beautiful structure on the kibbutz."

On Simchas Torah, Dafnah lost her family, but she found herself. They died, but her Jewish identity was born.

The holiday and festivities of Simchas Torah are unusual in their origins. They are not mentioned in the Torah or in the Talmud. It was never enacted as a full rabbinic holiday like Purim or Chanukah. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks z"l writes:

On Simchas Torah, without being commanded by any verse in the Torah or any decree of the Rabbis, Jews throughout the world sang and danced and recited poems in honor of the Torah, exactly as if they were dancing in the courtyard of the Temple at the Simchas Beis HaSho'evah, or as if they were King Dovid bringing the Ark to Jerusalem. They were determined to show God, and the world, that they could still be ach same'ach, as the Torah said about Succos: wholly, totally, given over to joy. It would be hard to find a parallel in the entire history of the human spirit of a people capable of such joy at a time when they were being massacred in the name of the God of love and compassion.

A people that can walk through the valley of the shadow of death and still rejoice is a people that cannot be defeated by any force or any fear... Simchas Torah was born when Jews had lost everything else, but they never lost their capacity to rejoice. Nechemiah was right when he said to the people weeping as they listened to the Torah, realizing how far they had drifted from it: "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nechemiah 8:10). A people whose capacity for joy cannot be destroyed is itself indestructible.

The year since Simchas Torah has been a fulfillment of the saying, "They Tried to Bury Us; They Did Not Know We Were Seeds." Simchas Torah was born against a backdrop of hate and tragedy. A year ago, we lost so many, we buried heroes of our people. But over this year, we birthed a new era, a new chapter for our people. It is still being written and we determine what it will say next.

The world has changed enormously since Simchas Torah of last year, have you? How can we honor all those who died? On a day marked by so much death, the only proper response is to birth a better version of ourselves and our people.

from: **Rabbi YY Jacobson** <rabiyy@theyeshiva.net> reply-to: info@theyeshiva.net

date: Oct 22, 2024, 10:06 PM

How Can We Dance This Simchas Torah?

By: Rabbi YY Jacobson

One Year Since the Massacre

Should we dance on this Simchat Torah, one year since the horrific massacre of complete Jewish communities, one that plunged a country and a nation into a year of untold grief, sorrow and pain?

It is a powerful question. But we ought to remember this: Hamas attacked the Jewish people on Simchas Torah with the intention to obliterate our joy and dancing.

The enemy wanted to sow panic into our hearts. It wanted Jews to be paralyzed by fear and depression. So our first responsibility is to lift our morale as Jews, to lift the morale of our sisters and brothers in the Holy Land and in the entire world. They aimed to destroy our Simchas Torah—our joy of life and of Judaism, our joy of Torah, and our connection to Eretz Yisroel, and to our history. So now we need to create Simchas Torah every day—to celebrate as Jews with our Torah, our land, and our people, every day, every hour, every minute. Certainly, on Simchas Torah, we ought to dance like never before!

Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Vitzen eulogized his son who was murdered on that Shabbos, Simchas Torah 5784, Oct. 7, 2023:

"We do not crave wars. But if a war was imposed on us—it will give new birth to our people. We will turn into a nation, a new people. We will teach the world our unique message. We begin a new journey, with our right foot. I see everyone around me waking up!"

The Experiment

I take a ounce of comfort in this incredible story, which is for me a metaphor for Jewish history.

16 years ago, an intriguing experiment made the news. The experiment – arranged by the Washington Post to study how people react to unexpected, out-of-context art – called for Joshua Bell, the Jewish world-renowned violinist, to stand in a Washington D. C. subway and play classical music. It was a Friday morning, January 12, 2007. Bell played for about 45 minutes, during which time more than a thousand people passed by. Ordinarily, when Bell gives a recital, he earns about a thousand dollars a minute (not bad for a nice Jewish boy).

How many people, do you think, stopped to hear the brilliant music? How many people were moved by the masterful renditions of Joshua Bell? 0.006 percent of the people who passed by paused to absorb the magic.

In the three-quarters of an hour that Joshua Bell played, seven people stopped what they were doing to hang around and take in the performance, at least for one minute. Twenty-seven gave money, most of them on the run. Throughout the entire time, there was never a crowd, not even for a second. In the 45 minutes he played in the subway, only 27 out of the 1,075 passersby threw a donation into his violin case, netting him a grand total of \$32.

In its aftermath, scores of articles were written about the experiment, and all kinds of questions were asked. Have we grown so superficial as to not appreciate art without a frame? Beauty without PR? Is there really no truth left if it is not "advertised" as such?

Why would people shell out upwards of hundred dollars a ticket to hear Josh Bell play and not stop to listen when the music was free? Is it all part of our herd mentality – if we aren't told something is good, we cannot realize it is good?

When you watch the video of the event, it is sad. It is sad to observe the opportunities that slip through our hands never to return; the rush of life which sucks up the essence of life itself.

The Taxi

In a wonderful article in Ami magazine,[1] Roizy Waldman highlighted a trivial detail that the Washington Post mentioned. Bell, the paper reported, took a taxi from his hotel to the subway station, merely three blocks, because his violin was too expensive to risk walking with on the street. What kind of violin was this to merit such care and protection?

As it turns out, the writer explains, the answer to this question leads us not only to the story of the violin, but also to a story about courage, perseverance, and the making of history.

The Story of Bronislaw Huberman

The story leads us to the previous owner of the violin, another Jew by the name of Bronislaw Huberman.

Born in 1882 to a secular Jewish family in Poland, Bronislaw Huberman's musical genius was discovered early. At that time, classical music was the music that mattered. He gave his first public concert at the age of 7. When Bronislaw was 11, he garnered the support of arts patron Count Zamoyski of Paris, who gave young Bronislaw a gift of a Stradivarius violin.

A Stradivarius is an instrument made by Antonio Stradivari, an Italian craftsman born in 1644. During his lifetime – he died in 1737 – he crafted more than 1,100 instruments. Of those, 540 violins, 50 cellos, and 12 violas still exist today. A "Strad" (as it is called in short) produces the most magical tones, unequaled by any other stringed instrument. An ordinary violin you can buy for 70 dollars; a Strad sells today for 5 to 20 million dollars.

(Though many have attempted to reproduce the exact sound, none have succeeded yet. Over the years, music historians and researchers have come up with various theories about why a Stradivarius produces such exceptional sounds. Some claim it's the wood Stradivari used; others say it's the varnish, and still others believe it's the waters of Cremona, the city where Stradivari lived. While others say it is all fantasy. Yet it still sells for millions.)

The Stradivarius gifted to Huberman by Count Zamoyski was crafted by Stradivari in 1713 (the Baal Shem Tov was 15 at the time; George Washington, l'havdil, was not born yet), making it more than three hundred years old now. He soon became one of the greatest violinists in Europe.

Playing in the world-renowned Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Huberman became world-famous.

But then darkness descended. The Nazi Regime came to power. "The true artist," Huberman once said, "does not create art as an end in itself; he creates art for human beings. Humanity is the goal." And he lived up to his words. In 1933, as Hitler took control of Germany, Jewish musicians who'd been employed for years by the prestigious Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra suddenly found themselves jobless. Each month, Hitler ordered more and more Jewish musicians to be fired, and no other orchestra was allowed to hire them. However, to preserve his reputation among foreign countries, Hitler tried to retain a handful of the most famous Jewish musicians in the orchestra. One of the musicians he was persuaded to keep was Bronislaw Huberman.

The orchestra's conductor, Wilhelm Furtwängler, sent Huberman a personal offer of employment. He would be from the few Jews allowed to remain. But Huberman refused and even issued a public letter denouncing Nazism.

But he did something else truly remarkable—and for this, he shall always be remembered, not only as a great violinist but as a great human being and a glorious Jew. Realizing that Jews will face danger in Germany, he created, for the first time ever, the Palestine Symphony Orchestra, inviting all the victimized Jewish musicians to join. In order to be granted entry, refugees had to demonstrate that their prospects of earning a living were strong. The soon-to-be Palestine Symphony Orchestra ensured that these refugees would be gainfully employed.

Huberman insisted that the musicians could only emigrate if they were accompanied by their spouses, siblings, children, and parents, and so managed to snag certificates for all of them. Unlike many who believed that this European anti-Semitic wave would soon pass, just as earlier anti-Semitic waves had, Huberman believed that Jews were no longer safe in Europe. He worked tirelessly to rescue as many people as he could from the Nazi clutches. He ensured the British government that he'd employ many more people than he possibly could.

While Huberman was struggling to persuade cultured musicians to make their home in a virtual desert, while he toiled to procure their visas, while he dissembled to the government in an effort to wrest more and more Jews away from Europe's ever-increasing perilous situation, he also had to put

together the orchestra itself. Money was needed. The musicians' morale had to be maintained. A venue had to be found, a conductor procured. On the latter front, Huberman lucked out. Italian Arturo Toscanini, one of the most renowned conductors in Europe, agreed to conduct the orchestra's first few performances. Toscanini, who wasn't Jewish, was a special soul, who despised Nazism and Fascism. He courageously spoke out against the Nazis and Fascists even at the cost of his personal safety. In fact, after one such outburst, a group of Fascists beat him bloody. But he refused to be silenced.

Toscanini traveled to Israel (then Palestine) in 1936 to train the orchestra and ready them for their first performance. In keeping with his idealism, he declined payment for his work, even paying for his travel expenses himself. "I had to show my solidarity," he said. "It is everyone's duty to help in this cause according to one's means."

Toscanini cemented the orchestra's reputation. He was held in such high regard that as soon as it became known that he would be the orchestra's conductor, fund-raising became easy, musicians clamored to become part of the orchestra, and people bought tickets to the concerts. In no time, nine concerts – in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, Cairo and Alexandria – were sold out.

"One has to build a fist against anti-Semitism," Huberman once said. "A first-class orchestra would be that fist."

The first concert took place on December 26, 1936, in Tel Aviv. Crowds of people who couldn't get tickets stood outside the windows and climbed up onto the roof to be able to hear the gorgeous music. When the concert was over, the audience gave the musicians a standing ovation that lasted close to thirty minutes—unheard of in the history of concertos.

Indeed, a first-class orchestra it became! The Palestine Symphony Orchestra toured the entire world, wowing audiences with their beautiful performances. In 1948, when the United Nations recognized Israel as a country, the orchestra changed its name to the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, which plays to this very day. Huberman died a year earlier, in 1947.

The Stolen Violin

But the story is not over.

On February 28, 1936, Huberman came to New York to give a recital at Carnegie Hall. Huberman always carried a double violin case, in which he kept his expensive Strad and another cheaper violin.

That night Huberman chose to play the second half of his concert on his "other violin," a Guarneri del Gesù. In the middle of the performance, the Strad was stolen from his dressing room. When the theft was discovered, the police were called while Huberman tried not to panic, continuing optimistically with his encores. The instrument had previously been stolen in 1919 from a hotel room in Vienna but was recovered days later when the thief tried to sell it. This time, Huberman was not so lucky.

Heartbroken, Huberman never saw his Stradivarius again. However, his great dream was fulfilled when the new Palestine Orchestra made its debut in December 1936 with the great Toscanini on the podium.

50 years passed. It is now 1985. A New York Violinist, Julian Altman, was diagnosed with stomach cancer. As he lay dying, he called his wife to his deathbed and told her he had stolen the violin from Huberman's room at Carnegie Hall back in 1936. Altman soon died.

His wife eventually returned the violin to Lloyd's of London and received a finder's fee. The instrument underwent a nine-month restoration by J&A Beare Ltd., which noted it was like "taking dirt off the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel."

The violin was soon sold to a British violinist, for 1.2 million dollars. In 2001, Joshua Bell paid almost four million dollars for the violin.

"This violin is special in so many ways," Bell said at a recent concert.[2] "It is overwhelming to think of how many amazing people have held it and heard it. When I perform in Israel with the Israel Philharmonic, I am always touched to think how many of the orchestra and audience members are direct descendants of the musicians Huberman saved from the Holocaust — with funds raised by concerts performed on the very same instrument I play every day. Who knows what other adventures will come to my precious violin in

the years to come? While it certainly will be enjoyed and admired long after I am not around anymore, for the time being, I count myself incredibly lucky to have been its caretaker on its 300th birthday."

Now, I understood why Joshua Bell took a taxi from the hotel to the subway station in Washington; he did not want to take chances with Huberman's Stradivarius.

A Parable for Judaism

It is a magnificent story. But, in my mind, it is also a parable for the story of our people from Sinai till today. Does it not capture the essence and theme of Simchas Torah? Especially this year?

Thousands of years ago, at the foot of Sinai, we were given a "Strad violin," an instrument to generate the most exquisite music the world has ever heard—music for our souls, for our homes, for our communities, and for our world. "Your laws have been symphonies for me," King David sings in Psalms. Life is a powerful symphony and you can contribute your sonata. The objective of Judaism is to allow each person, and each creature, to express their deepest music. It sees each of us as a "violin," capable of producing our unique ballad. In the famous words of 12th-century Spanish poet Rabbi Judah Halevi (which made their way into the song Jerusalem of Gold) "ani kenor lesharayich," I am a violin to your melodies.[3]

And just as the chords of a violin must be tied down to allow the music to play, Torah mitigates and restricts certain behaviors, not in order to tie us down, but rather to allow our music to play.

Our violin—our Strad—has endured a lot. Just like Huberman's violin, our violin too was exiled, stolen, and almost disappeared. Our faith and our Torah came close to extinction, through Nazi and Soviet genocide on one hand, and mass assimilation on the other. Now, Hamas, Iran, Hezbollah and their supporters wish to annihilate the violin.

But the unpredictable happened. The violin was recovered—time and time again—and today it plays in Jewish homes and communities all across the globe. We have "Joshua Bells" all across the world playing that ancient violin, with splendor, beauty, and exquisiteness. Judaism has experienced a renaissance. Jews are studying Torah; celebrating Mitzvos and living a Jewish life. On Simchas Torah, millions of our people the world over will dance with our Divine "violin."

Over the last year we witnessed a renaissance in Jewish life in Israel and the world over.

Yet, so often the music can be playing right near us, yet we ignore it. We can have one of the greatest violinists on the subway playing the most beautiful ballads, but we are too busy, too stressed, too rushed, too lazy, too callous, too overwhelmed to even stop and take it in.

We were given the Torah—the most time-tested violin, not 300 years old, but 3333 years old. And it produces the most profound music—not only classical music to enrich the spirit, but Divine music to give meaning to life, to offer depth, hope, vitality, spirituality, purpose to life; Divine music to keep families together, marriages fresh, intimacy alive; Divine music to be able to find happiness and joy in a world of chaos, fear, anxiety, depression, and confusion; Divine music to offer perspective, vision, wisdom, guidance in a time of moral ambivalence; Divine music that allowed us to stay the course and thrive over three millennia, despite endless challenges and savage suffering.

It is Divine music that gives us hope and resolve to battle the horrific evil in the world with unwavering courage and determination, and an inner serenity, knowing goodness and truth will prevail.

The music is right here, right now. But we can just pass by and ignore it. Not because we are bad, but simply because we are in a rush or we are just too entrenched in our comfort zones.

On Simchat Torah, we dedicate a day to dance with our eternal and sacred Torah. "Sisu V'simchu B'Simchat Torah," rejoice and celebrate with the joy of the Torah.

Take pause and celebrate the music which has allowed our souls to soar and touch heaven, every day, every moment.

Happy Simchat Torah![4]

[1] Here is a link to her article, much of which I copied in the subsequent story: <https://www.aish.com/ci/s/The-Violin-that-Witnessed-History.html>
[2] <https://csosoundsandstories.org/how-a-once-lost-stradivarius-found-its-way-to-joshua-bell/>

[3] The Baal Shem Tov teaches that Halacha is the acronym of "Hareoo L'Hashem Kal Haaretz," "let the whole earth sing to G-d." For the function of Halacha, Jewish law, is to synchronize our lives with the symphony of nature.

[4] I have used these sources for the story: www.aish.com/ci/s/The-Violin-that-Witnessed-History.html www.csosoundsandstories.org/how-a-once-lost-stradivarius-found-its-way-to-joshua-bell/
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Rabbi Yochanan Zweig This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Leila Applebaum

Posted on October 11, 2023

Dancing with the Bride

The Torah that Moshe commanded us is a heritage to the Congregation of Jacob (33:4). Simchas Torah is a day in which we celebrate the Torah. Why did Chazal see fit to designate a separate day for Simchas Torah? Would not Shavuos, 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 Moshe 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, such as "This is the Torah that Moshe placed before Bnei Yisroel"?

The last four parshios in the Torah record the events that transpired on the day of Moshe's death. A major event that ensued was the new covenant in Parshas Nitzavim. The concept of "each Jew is a guarantor for his fellow Jew," in regard to mitzvos and aveiros, is introduced as a result of our responsibility for the covenant.

The general concept of a guarantor is discussed by the Talmud. The Talmud teaches that one who accepts upon himself to repay a loan should the borrower default is required by Torah law to honor his commitment to pay. The commentaries raise the following difficulty: Legally, for a person to be liable to perform a service, there must be consideration, such as money.

What is the instrument that obligates a guarantor to honor his commitment? The Ritva answers that although the guarantor does not receive money, he nevertheless receives the satisfaction that the lender is relying upon his credibility to issue the loan. This benefit serves as the instrument for the transaction in lieu of money. In light of this explanation, the following difficulty arises: Why are Bnei Yisroel bound to their commitment of arvus? What were they receiving that they did not already have?

To begin answering the aforementioned questions, we must analyze another concept that was introduced on the day that Moshe died: "Torah is no longer in the Heavens." While Moshe was alive he consulted with Hashem concerning all difficult Torah legislation. Therefore, Hashem was the final arbiter for Torah legislation. Thus, as long as Moshe was alive, Torah was still in the Heavens. On the day of Moshe's death, Bnei Yisroel were given unilateral authority over all Torah legislation. This is what is meant by "The Torah is no longer in the Heavens." This new authorization that Bnei Yisroel received is the instrument that obligates them to honor their commitment to be guarantors.

At Sinai, when Bnei Yisroel received the Torah, Chazal describe the relationship formed as that of a bride and groom. Hashem was the groom and Bnei Yisroel was the bride. On the day that Moshe died a new relationship was formed; Bnei Yisroel became the groom and the Torah was the bride. This is alluded to in the verse, "Torah tziva lanu Moshe morasha kehillats Yaakov." Chazal see in the word "morasha" an allusion to the word "meorasa," which means "betrothed" (i.e. the Torah that Moshe commanded

us is also betrothed to us). The notion of the Torah not being in Heaven and the Torah becoming the bride to Bnei Yisroel are one and the same. The Talmud instructs a father to begin teaching his son Torah with the verse that reflects this new relationship.

Thus, Shavuos celebrates Bnei Yisroel becoming a bride to Hashem, while Simchas Torah celebrates Bnei Yisroel becoming betrothed to the Torah. This is reflected in the customs of the day. In most Jewish communities, a representative is chosen to be the "chassan Torah," the groom to the Torah. We also dance with the Torah as a groom dancing with his bride.

from: Rabbi Chanan Morrison <chanan@ravkooktorah.org>

date: Oct 16, 2024, 5:35 AM

Simchat Torah: Israel's Triumph of Faith

Rav Kook Torah

If you open Rav Kook's prayer book, Olat Re'iyah, and turn to the end of the celebratory Hakafot of Simchat Torah, you will encounter the verse:

הִרְיִינוּ גוֹיִם עִמּוֹ כִּי דַם עֲבָדֶיךָ יִקָּוֶם וְנִקְמָם לְשִׁיב לְצַרְיֵי וְכַפֵּר אֶדְמָתוֹ עִמּוֹ. "O nations, sing out in praise of His people! For He will avenge the blood of His servants, inflict revenge upon His adversaries, and appease His land and His people." (Deut. 32:43)

It seems out of place — what are these words doing here? What is the connection of this verse to the joy of Simchat Torah?

The Songs of the Jewish Soldiers In B'kol HaNe'vuah, Rabbi David HaKohen, Rav Kook's devoted disciple, offers a vivid portrayal of how Rav Kook would sing and rejoice on Simchat Torah. During Zman Simchateinu, "the time of our rejoicing," he recalls, "our master would dance beautiful dances."

Surrounded by students and visitors, Rav Kook would sing the songs of the Jewish soldiers conscripted by Tsar Nicholas — boys as young as twelve forced to serve twenty-five brutal years in the Russian army. Those songs of defiance and faith, embodying the eternal bond between Israel and God, were part of the celebration of Simchat Torah. Rav Kook intertwined the suffering and steadfast loyalty of the Jewish soldiers with the joy of Simchat Torah, the joy of Netzach Yisrael.

Simchat Torah, 1929 But it wasn't just the pain of past sufferings he brought into that sacred celebration. He also incorporated more recent tragedies.

A terrible sadness marked the holiday of Simchat Torah after 1929. The air was thick with grief following the horrific Arab riots and the massacre in Hebron that year, tragedies that shook the land to its core.

How could anyone sing? How could anyone dance?

When Rav Kook entered the circle of the first Hakafah that Simchat Torah, he began singing with holy fervor: "O nations, sing out in praise of His people!"

Why will the nations of the world sing out Israel's praise?

This verse appears at the conclusion of the Song of Ha'azinu, the song that speaks of the unfolding drama of Jewish history. When God will bring justice upon those who oppressed and subjugated His people, the nations will stand in awe. They will look upon Israel with amazement, marveling at a people who, despite centuries of persecution and unimaginable trials, never wavered in their devotion.

Rashi writes that the nations will proclaim: "See how praiseworthy this nation is! See how they clung to the Holy One, even in the face of suffering. They did not abandon Him, aware of God's protection and justice."

The verse concludes that God "will avenge the blood of His servants... and appease His land and His people." As Rashi explains, "He will appease His people for the suffering they endured, for the wrongs their enemies inflicted upon them."

Hearing Rav Kook sing "Harninu goyim," streams of tears flowed from the eyes of the crowd. Immediately a mighty circle formed. With hearts bleeding and eyes shedding tears, the melody caught on, sweeping up the entire congregation. The circle that formed was a gathering of souls, bound together in shared grief and hope.

In that dance, Rav Kook showed that our joy is not naïve. It acknowledges our suffering, yet transcends it, drawing on our faith that the Eternal One of Israel, who has carried His people through the trials of history, will bring us healing and redemption.