

*The Board, Administration, Faculty, & Staff
at Vancouver Talmud Torah
wish a*

מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה

Mo'adim l'simha

Joyous Festival Season

to you and your extended families.

*Cathy Lowenstein
School Principal*

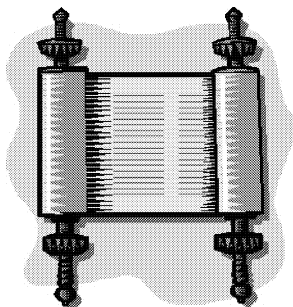
*Rabbi Matthew Bellas
School Rabbi*

Sukkot, Hoshana Rabbah, Sh'mini Atzeret & Simhat Torah 5773

September 30th-October 9th, 2012

סוכות, הושענא רבה, שמיני אֶצֶרֶת וְשִׂמְחַת תּוֹרָה

שנת תשע"ג



“Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of the Lord seven days: a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. On the first day you shall take the product of *badar* trees, branches of palm trees, bough of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days...You shall live in booths seven days, all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, in order that future generations may know that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I am the Lord your God.” (Lev. 23:39-43)

According to the biblical calendar (the month of being the seventh month), Sukkot is the third and final of the main pilgrimage festivals (Pesah and Shavu'ot being the other two). Much of biblical and early rabbinic Jewish law and practice were based upon the agricultural life of the Israelite people living in the Promised Land. Completing a successful planting and harvesting cycle left farming families with a great deal to be thankful for and the festival of Sukkot as prescribed by the Torah fixed the time and places at which such gratitude was to be expressed and celebration to be held. However, if one reads the biblical passage above carefully, one will see another reason for the celebration of the festival Sukkot: to remind the future generations of the Exodus from Egypt and the living conditions during the wandering in the wilderness which followed. Therefore, in effect, we have a double-layered festival being prescribed here, one layer focusing very much on the human need to celebrate the end of a difficult and unpredictable harvesting season, the other focusing on the relationship between the divine and the Jewish people, serving as a reminder of where we come from, our history, and the role God plays in making the miracles of nature possible for human enjoyment.

Each of the two major ritual objects or tangible representations of the festival of Sukkot are prescribed in the passage above. Sukkot is well-known for its symbols of the “four species” - the lulav comprised of the לולב (*lulav*) palm branch, הדס (*badas*) myrtle branches, and ערבה and אֶרָוָה (*arava*) willow branches, and the אֶתְרוֹג (*etrog*) the citron fruit. These four species, physical symbols of the completed harvest of the fall season, are grasped together during the הלל *Hallel* service and waved, at various times, in all directions (details to follow below) to represent the traditional rabbinic sense of God's omnipresence. The Sukkah is a very real reminder of the fragility of life. Just as the Israelites were subject to the elements during their forty year sojourn in the wilderness after leaving Exodus, so too are we - even in the modern world - subject to any number of unpredictable and uncontrollable influences on our everyday lives. In a time when humanity is obsessed with the effort to take control of that which surrounds it, Sukkot commands us to let go of such desires and pursuits, to take time to commune with the divine, to meditate on the ideas of fragility and temporariness that are at the core of the human experience. We are commanded to eat our meals and sleep fully exposed to whatever nature brings our way for seven days in an effort to connect us to that which we so often actively ignore, forget, or fight against.



The biblical passage above delineates an additional festival day, to be observed immediately following the end of Sukkot: Sh'mini Atzeret. It is not clear whether or not it is to be a separate festival or the last day of Sukkot. In their generations, the Rabbis determined that Sh'mini Atzeret is a festival unto itself, completely separate, though immediately after, Sukkot. Unlike Sukkot, no rationale was provided for this additional festival in the biblical text. However, the Rabbis came up with many homiletic explanations for the holiday, the most popular being God, serving us gracious host during the lengthy High Holiday and Sukkot period, invites the Jewish people to stay near for one extra day before leaving (remember that Sukkot was a pilgrimage festival, its duration spent in Jerusalem).

This interpretation is rooted in the name of the festival, for the Hebrew word **עֲצֶרֶת** - *atzeret* - means “stop”; the pilgrims should hold back from departing for one additional day. However, all such explanations are midrashic in nature and hold no real basis in the Bible, unlike the other sacred festivals in the Jewish calendar.

No mention either of Hoshana Rabbah (the last day of Sukkot) or Simḥat Torah is made in the Torah, as is evident from the quotation cited. The reason behind this is that these celebrations have their foundation in the rabbinic tradition, not in the Bible. Hoshana Rabbah gets its name from the liturgical custom of *hoshanot* which are recited during the morning service on Sukkot. Each day, one such liturgical poem is recited as the congregation marches around the sanctuary, with lulav and etrog in hand. On Hoshana Rabbah (literally, “many *Hoshana* poems”), seven such poems are recited and circuits made.



Simḥat Torah, the day on which we celebrate the completion and beginning anew of the Torah reading cycle, is an example of how traditions and laws can be created from the “bottom-up.” One learns from the rabbinic tradition that communities began to mark Simḥat Torah with new rituals and observances without any general rules and regulations prescribing them. The Jewish people were so inspired by the power of this ending and new beginning that it became a festival unto itself. This is not to say that the ending and beginning of the cycle for Torah reading did not once occur on a festival day. In fact, they did: on Sh’mini Atzeret. In Israel, where two festival days are not celebrated, except in the case of Rosh HaShana, Sh’mini Atzeret was the day on which the Torah was completed and begun anew. However, in the Diaspora, where two days of festivals are observed, the second day of the festival took on a character all its own, becoming known over the course of the generations as “Simḥat Torah.”

Festival Schedule:

Sukkot:

Sunday evening, September 30th, 2012

Candle lighting at 6:34pm

Festival services in your local synagogue (check synagogue publications for start times)

The Festival Meal in the Sukkah (or in the home if you cannot eat in a *sukkah*)

Monday, October 1st, 2012

Festival morning services in your local synagogue, including joyous *Hallel* and the waving of the *lulav* and *etrog*.

Festival Meal in the Sukkah (or in the home if you cannot eat in a *sukkah*)

Candle lighting for the Second Day of Sukkot is after 7:32pm (see “Transferring Fire” Directions below)

Festival evening services in your local synagogue (check synagogue publications for exact times)

Tuesday, October 2nd, 2012

Festival morning services in your local synagogue, including joyous *Hallel* during which the lulav and etrog are waved.

Festival Meal in the Sukkah (or in the home if you will not be eating in a *sukkah*)

Festival Havdalah: 7:30pm

Wednesday-Saturday/Shabbat, October 3rd-6th, 2012 - *Hol HaMoed Sukkot* - Intermediate Days of Sukkot

Morning services, including *Hallel* and the waving of the lulav and etrog, except on Shabbat (check synagogue publications for exact times).

Meals should be eaten in the sukkah, when possible

Sunday, October 7th, 2012 - *Hoshana Rabbah* - The final day of Sukkot

Morning Services contain the waving of lulav and etrog & **the ceremonial 7 *hakafot* (circuits marched around the sanctuary)** with lulav and etrog in hand, replicating the centuries old tradition from ancient times. The leader of the service wears the white kittel robe (as on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur) in honor of this day, according to tradition, being the last opportunity to complete one's repentance of the High Holy Day season.

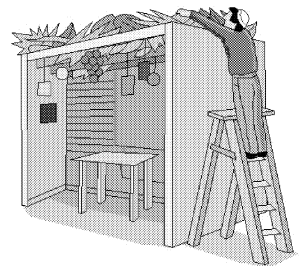
Appropriate Greeting for the Festivals

מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה / חַג שְׂמֵחַ
Mo'adim l'simcha / Hag samei'ah
Seasons for joy / Joyous festival

Building a Sukkah:

Traditionally, the first leg of a sukkah being built at home or for the community is to be laid immediately after the end of Yom Kippur. Although, it is permitted to begin both before and after this time, the Sukkah should not be completed before the end of Yom Kippur so that it can be at least partially erected and completed in the intervening days between Yom Kippur and the first day of Sukkot.

There are many different methods for building a Sukkah, be it a pre-fab system purchased from a company or from scratch for the industrious among us. There are few requirements that govern the materials that go into the building of the frame of the Sukkah. It must only serve as a **דִּירַת אֶרְעִי** - *dirat ara'i* - temporary structure and have at least two and a half walls that are free standing, not part of an existing building. The codes contain many laws related to size restrictions, but for the purposes of this booklet, we need only know that it should not be inordinately high or low, wide or narrow. However, in order to have a proper Sukkah, one must pay very close attention to the **סִכָּךְ** - *s'kha'keh* - roof covering. First, it must be made from natural materials, no synthetics or metals. Second, there must not be too much or too little of it. It is required that it be thin enough to be able to see the stars through it on a clear night, but thick enough so that it provides at least 50% shade.



The Rabbis teach that the Sukkah is meant to become your dwelling for the duration of the festival. One is supposed to eat all meals and sleep in the Sukkah. There is a teaching that goes so far as to say that one should even move his or her dining furniture into the Sukkah to make the family's intentions clear. However, the Rabbis are also keenly aware of the climatic realities of life, even for those living in Israel. There are times when Sukkot falls in the late fall when it can get very cold, rainy, or it may even snow. If the "living conditions" in the Sukkah get to be unmanageable, it is permitted to move back into the home. The minimum requirement in such a case is that one recite *kiddush* and *ha'motzi* inside the Sukkah.

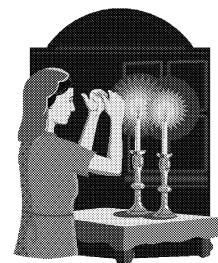
"Transferring Fire" for Second Day of Yom Tov and Shabbat Following Yom Tov Candle Lighting: Going back as far as a direct instruction from the Torah, it is forbidden to kindle new fire on Shabbat and holy Festival days. Lighting candles and then reciting the blessing on a regular Friday night or the first day of *yom tov* is not a problem because the fire is lit before the incoming of the day. However, when we celebrate two days of *yom tov* or a Shabbat immediately following a *yom tov*, one cannot strike a match to light the candles. **So, then, how does one light candles?** The solution to the problem is "transferring fire." One may transfer fire from an already pre-existing flame in order to light the candles. Therefore, one may use the pilot light of a gas stove or, as is the more traditional practice, the light of a *yahrzeit*/memorial candle which was lit before the onset of the first day of the festival. The first candle is lit from one of these pre-existing sources and then used to light the second candle, with the blessing recited after both candles for the second day of *yom tov* or Shabbat.

Program for Ritual Practices in the Sukkah and in the Home:

Candle Lighting for Festivals

הדלקת נרות ליום טוב

ברוך אתה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר (שֶׁל שַׁבָּת וְ) שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.
Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik neir (shel Shabbat v') shel yom tov.



Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments, and commanded us to light the candles [of Shabbat and] of the festival.

ברוך אתה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִנֵּינּוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.
Barukh Atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam she'he'yanu v'kiy'manu v'higi'yanu la-z'man ha-zeh.
Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Blessing the Children

ברכת הבנים והבנות

For Sons:

לבנים:

יְשִׁמְךָ א-לֹהִים כְּאַפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה:
Y'simkha Elohim k'Ephrayim v'ke'Menasheh
May God make you like Ephraim and Menasheh

For Daughters:

לבנות:

יְשִׁמְךָ א-לֹהִים כְּסָרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל, וְלֵאָה:
Y'simeikh Elohim k'Sara, Rivka, Raheil, v'Leah.
May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

For All Sons and Daughters:

לכל הבנים והבנות:

יְבָרְכֶךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.
Y'varekh'kha Adonai v'yishm'rekha.
May God bless you and protect you.

יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחַנֶּה.
Ya'eir Adonai panav eilekha vi'khuneka.
May God shine God's presence upon you and be gracious unto you.

יֵשָׁא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׁם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם.
Yisa Adonai panav eilekha v'yaseim l'kha shalom.
May God lift God's presence be toward you and grant you peace.

Kiddush for Festival Eve

קידוש לערב יום טוב

לשבת: וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי. וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל אֲבָכָם וַיְכַל אֱ-לֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה. וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱ-לֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ. כִּי כֹן שָׁבַת מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱ-לֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:
On Shabbat Eve only: Vay'hi erev vay'hi vokeir yom ha'shishi. Va'y'khalu ha'shamayim v'ha'aretz v'chol tz'va'am va'y'khal Elohim ba'yom ha'sh'vi'i m'lakhto asher asa. Ya'yish'bot ba'yom ha'sh'vi'i mikol m'lakhto asher asa. Va'y'varekh Elohim et yom ha'sh'vi'i va'y'kadeish oto, ki vo shavat mikol m'lakhto asher bara Elohim la'asot.

On Shabbat Eve: It was evening, it was morning, the sixth day. The heavens and the earth and all that were within it were completed. On the seventh day, God completed all the work that God had done. Then, on the seventh day, God rested from all the work that God had done. Then, God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it did God rest from all the work of creation that God had done.



סְבִיר מְרִנָּן וְרַבָּנָן וְרַבּוֹתַי.
Savri maranan v'rabanan v'rabotai.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who creates the fruit of the vine.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל עָם וְרוֹמַמְנוּ מִכָּל לָשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתַי. וְתַתֵּן לָנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ
בְּאַהֲבָה [שְׁבֻתוֹת לְמִנוּחָה ו] מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה, חַגִּים וְזִמְנִים לְשִׂשׁוֹן, אֶת יוֹם [הַשְּׁבֻת הַזֶּה וְאֶת יוֹם]
בְּסוּכּוֹת: חַג הַסּוּכּוֹת הַזֶּה.

בְּשִׁמְנֵי עֶצֶרֶת וּבְשִׂמְחַת תּוֹרָה: הַשְּׁמִינִי, חַג הָעֶצֶרֶת הַזֶּה.

וְזִמן שְׂמִיחָתֵנוּ [בְּאַהֲבָה] מִקְרָא קָדֵשׁ, זִכָּר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם: כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֵרָתְךָ, וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים [וְשְׁבֻת] וּמוֹעֲדֵי
קִדְּשֶׁךָ [בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן] בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הַנִּחַלְתָּנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי מִקְדָּשׁ [הַשְּׁבֻת ו] יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזִּמְנִים:

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha-olam asher bahar banu mi-kol am, v'rom'manu mi-kol lashon v'kei'd'shanu b'mitzvotav, va-titein lanu, Adonai Eloheinu, b'ahava [shabbatot li-m'nuha u'] mo'adim l'simha hagim u-z'manim l'sason, et yom [ha-shabbat hazeh v'et yom]

On Sukkot: hag ha-Sukkot hazeh,

On Sh'mini Atzeret and Simhat Torah: ha'shmini, hag ha'atzeret hazeh.

Z'man simhateinu [b'ahava] mikra kodesh, zeikher li'tzi'yat mitz'ra'yim. ki vanu vaharta v'otanu qidashta mikol ha'amim [v'shabat] u-mo'adei kodsh'kha [b'ahavah u'v'ratzon] b'simha u-v'sason bin'hal'tanu. Barukh Atah Adonai, m'kadesh [ha-shabbat v'] Yisra'el v'ha-z'manim.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who has chosen us from among all peoples, and exalted us above every language and sanctified us with God's commandments, and you gave us, Lord our God, with love [Sabbaths for rest, and] appointed times for gladness, festivals and times for joy, this day [of Sabbath and this day of]

On Sukkot: of the festival of Sukkot.

On Shmini Atzeret and Simhat Torah: of the eighth, the festival Shmini Atzeret.

The time of our gladness [with love] a holy convocation, a memorial of the exodus from Egypt. Indeed, You have chosen us and made us holy among all peoples and [the Sabbath and] Your holy festivals [in love and favor] in gladness and in joy have You given us as an inheritance. Blessed are You, who sanctifies [the Shabbat and] Israel and the seasons.

בְּמוֹצָאֵי שַׁבָּת: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ.

On Saturday night: Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha-olam, borei m'orei ha'eish.

On Saturday night: Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who has created the lights of fire.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְבָרִיל בֵּין קָדֵשׁ לְחֹל, בֵּין אֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשִׁשַּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה: בֵּין
קִדְּשַׁת שְׁבֻת לְקִדְּשַׁת יוֹם טוֹב הַבְּרָלָה, וְאֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִשִּׁשַּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה קִדְּשַׁת, הַבְּרָלָה וְקִדְּשַׁת אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְּשֶׁךָ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
ה' הַמְבָרִיל בֵּין קָדֵשׁ לְחֹשֶׁךְ.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha-olam, hamavdil ein kodesh l'hol, bein or l'hoshekh, bein Yisra'el la'amim, bein yom ha'sh'vi'i l'sheishet y'mei ha'ma'a'se. Bein k'dushat Shabbat lik'dushat yom tov bivdalta, v'et yom ha'sh'vi'i misheishet y'mei ha'ma'a'se kidashta, bivdalta v'kidashta et amkha Yisra'el bik'dushatekha. Barukh Atah Adonai ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who has differentiated between the sacred and the mundane, between light and dark, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and six days of activity; between the sanctity of Shabbat and the festivals have You differentiated, and the seventh day from the six days of

activity have You sanctified, you have differentiated and sanctified Your people Israel with your holiness. Blessed are You, the One who differentiates between the holy and the holy.

When eating the festive meal in the sukkah, *kiddush* is followed by the two blessings below:

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם. אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו לישב בסוכה.
Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu leishev ba'sukkah.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments, and commanded us to dwell in the sukkah.

On the first night of Sukkot only:

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם. שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.
Barukh Atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melek ha'olam she'he'chayanu v'kaiymanu v'higeyanu la-z'man ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.



Kiddush for Festival Day

קדוש ליום טוב

לשבת: ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת. לעשות את השבת לדורתם ברית עולם. ביני ובין בני ישראל אות היא לעולם. כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ. וביום השביעי שבת וינפש.

On Shabbat Afternoon: V'shamru v'nei Yisra'el et ha'Shabbat, la'asot et ha'Shabbat l'dorotam b'rit olam. Beini u'vein b'nei Yisra'el ot hi l'olam ki sheishet yamim asa Adonai et ha'shama'yim v'et ha'aretz, u'va'yom ha'sh'vi'i shavat va'yinafash.

On Shabbat Afternoon: The children of Israel shall observe the Shabbat for all their generations as an everlasting covenant. Between Me and the children of Israel shall it be an everlasting sign, for in six days did God create the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he ceased from work and rested.

וידבר משה את מועדי ה' אל בני ישראל:

Va'y'dabeir Moshe et mo'adei Adonai el b'nei Yisra'el.

Moses declared the sacred times of the Lord to the children of Israel.

סברי מרנן ורבנן ורבותי.

Savri maranan v'rabanan v'rabotai.

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם. בורא פרי הגפן.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who creates the fruit of the vine.

Ritual Hand Washing

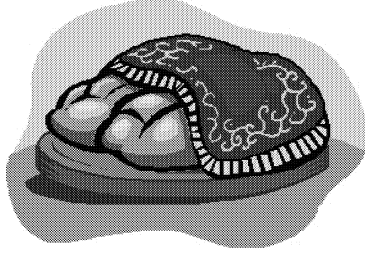
נמילת ידיים

The hands are ritually washed before breaking bread at any meal.

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם. אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו על נמילת ידיים.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat yada'yim.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments, and commanded us to wash the hands.



Two hallot are held together for the recitation of the following blessing, marking the beginning of the festive meal.

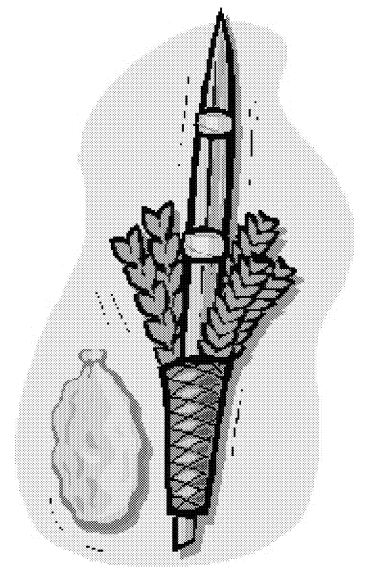
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam ha'motzi lehem min ha'aretz.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has brought forth bread from the earth.

Waving the Lulav and Etrog

There is a certain ancient and primal quality to the ritual customs associated with the waving of the lulav and etrog. They are an echo of an earlier time in Jewish history, one during which individuals' lives were centered around the unpredictability and physical laboriousness of the agricultural lifestyle. Imagine coming to the end of long harvest season, the bounty of your land before you, both exhausted and exhilarated at the same time. You are commanded to make pilgrimage to Jerusalem to offer thanksgiving to God for the gifts of the land and the good fortune that nature went according to plan. In order to make a tangible connection between the joy and relief that you feel and the divine essence in nature that made your bounty possible, you take hold of your אַרְבָּעָה מִיָּנִים, the four species of the lulav and etrog, at the outset of the *Hallel* service and prepare to show your gratitude for what you have received and your understanding of God's place in the universe. *Hallel* is a service replete with songs of praise of exuberance. At certain prescribed moments, you join in with your fellow pilgrims and wave your lulav and etrog in all directions. It is a time characterized by a mixture of joy and satisfaction and reverence.



If you will be attending *Shaharit* synagogue services during Sukkot, the following is a step-by-step guide to the taking and waving of the lulav and etrog during the service:

When the beginning of *Hallel* is announced, take your lulav and etrog in your hands, with the etrog's *pitom* facing downward. You will then recite the blessing below:

Taking the Lulav [and Etrog]

נְטִילַת לולב

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לולב.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat lulav.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments, and commanded us to take the lulav.

When lulav and etrog are taken for the first time:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

Barukh Atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melek ha'olam she'heyanu v'kiy'manu v'higi'yanu la-z'man ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Wave your lulav and etrog inward (toward your body) three times in each direction: front, right, back, left, up, and down.

The lulav and etrog are then held together until the 'הוֹדוּ לַה' (*Hodu l'Adonai*) text in the service is reached. The lulav and etrog are waved in one direction for each word, with the exception of God's name.

הוֹדוּ - *Hodu* - Front/East
'לַה' - *l'Adonai* - held upright
כִּי - *ki* - Right/South
טוֹב - *tov* - Back/West
כִּי - *Ki* - Left/North
לְעוֹלָם - *l'olam* - Up
חֲסֻדּוֹ: - *hasdo* - Down

The leader of the service will then chant the second line of the text:

יֹאמַר נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֻדּוֹ:
Yomar na Yisra'el ki l'olam hasdo.

The congregation is then supposed to repeat the 'הוֹדוּ לַה' (*Hodu l'Adonai*) line with the exact same waving procedure as described above.

Later on in the *Hallel* service, four short verses are found that are also accompanied by waving of the lulav and etrog. There are actually only two lines, each one repeated. The directions of the waving follow precisely those from earlier in the service, the only change being that each **syllable** gets waved upon, except for the name of God.

אָ - נָא ה' הוּ - שִׁי - עָה נָא:
A - NA ADONAI HO - SHI - AH NA

אָנָּה - אַ ה' הָצֵ - לִי - חָה נָא:
A - NA ADONAI HATZ - LI - HA - NA

Depending upon the custom of the local synagogue, the lulav and etrog will either be put to the side until later in the service or kept. Some congregations will do the *Hoshanot* march immediately after *Hallel*, some will wait until a later time. At which ever point your synagogue does the *Hoshanot*, it is a time when the lulav and etrog will be needed. They are not waved during the recitation of the liturgical poem and march around the sanctuary, but simply carried until you return to your seat.



Shemini Atzeret occurs immediately after Sukkot. Although it's name implies that it is the eighth day of Sukkot, the Rabbis consider it to be a separate holiday. There are many explanations of the meaning and purpose of this holiday. The word "*atzeret*" can mean either "stoppage," "final," or "gathering." The Torah states: "On the eighth day you shall hold an atzeret; you shall not do any work." (Numbers 29:35)

In the Talmud, Sh'mini Atzeret is understood as a day highlighting the unique relationship between God and the Jewish people: "On Sukkot there were a total of 70 cows offered as sacrifices over the seven-day holiday. They

offered 13 on the first day, 12 on the second, etc. until the final day when they offered six. On Sh'mini Atzeret only one cow was offered. Rabbi Eliezer taught. The 70 cows [of Sukkot] are in correspondence to the 70 nations of the world. What is the purpose of the lone cow [of Sh'mini Atzeret]? It corresponds to the singular nation. A parable: There was a king who said to his servants, "make for me a great feast." On the last day he said to his lover, "Make for me a small feast so that I may derive pleasure from you" (Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 55b). In his commentary on the Torah (Numbers 29:36), Rashi understands and explains Sh'mini Atzeret as being God's expression of affection for the Jewish people as if saying, "Your departure is difficult for me. Delay it one more day."

Sh'mini Atzeret Schedule:

Wednesday evening, October 19th, 2011

Festival Candle lighting at 5:58pm

Festival services in your local synagogue (check synagogue publications for exact times)

The Festival Meal in the Home

Thursday, October 20th, 2011

Morning Festival services at the local synagogue including the Geshem prayer for rain during Musaf (check synagogue publications for exact start times)

Festival Meal in the Home

Simhat Torah Candle Lighting: after 6:58pm

The festival of Sh'mini Atzeret does not have any of its own distinguishing ritual characteristics. In fact, it is often a spiritual letdown after the dramatic waving of the lulav and etrog and living in the sukkah that characterize Sukkot. However, this change could be deemed appropriate, filling the role of transitional day between the overwhelming experiences of Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur and Sukkot and the "regular" weekdays which will follow. A quieter festival day is a final taste of the sanctity of the festival season, but comes with the knowledge of the ordinary which is soon to come.

There is one liturgical change that occurs on Sh'mini Atzeret which is worth noting: **גֶּשֶׁם** (*geshem*), the prayer for rain. This time in the fall season marks the beginning of the change in the weather that will determine whether or not the soil will be fertile or barren, based on the rains that fall in the Land of Israel. Therefore, this special liturgical poem calling for the blessing of proper rains is added during the *Amidah* of the *Musaf* service. This marks the beginning of the period during which we add the:

Mashiv ha'ruah u'morid ha'gashem
Let the wind blow and the rain fall

into the second paragraph of each *Amidah*. This addition remains until the end of the rainy season at Pesah, at which time a different liturgical poem is recited calling for **טַל** (*tal*) - dew. It is important to note that this prayer for rain is a prayer for the climate in the Land of Israel only. In the Diaspora, climactic patterns are different and the fall/winter weather may have already started, as is often the case when Sukkot falls later in the month of October.

Simhat Torah



Thursday night, October 20th, 2011

Festival Candle lighting after 6:57pm (See "Transferring Fire" above)

Festival services in your local synagogue (check synagogue publications for exact start times) **with the festive and joyous 7 hakafot with singing and dancing to celebrate the completion and restarting of the Torah reading cycle.**

Friday, October 21st, 2011

Morning Festival services at the local synagogue (check synagogue

publications for exact start times) **with the festive and joyous 7 *hakafot* with singing and dancing to celebrate the completion and restarting of the Torah reading cycle.**

Festival Meal in the Home

Shabbat after Simḥat Torah Candle Lighting: 5:54pm (See “Transferring Fire” above)

The synagogue is the center for the celebration of Simḥat Torah because the festival is focused on the cycle for reading the Torah. Simḥat Torah marks the ending and new beginning of the public reading the Torah. There are two traditions for this reading: a “full *k’riyah*” (full reading of the weekly portion) and the triennial (reading one third of each weekly portion on Shabbat morning). Each of these traditions has deep roots in the rabbinic law codes. The triennial cycle has its origins in the traditions of the land of Israel (as recorded in the Palestinian Talmud/*Talmud Yerushalmi*), while the complete reading comes down to us from the Babylonian Talmud/*Talmud Bavli*. The one key difference is that the ancient triennial tradition was not to read one third of each portion each week as we do today, but rather to read a third of the entire Torah each year, completing the cycle and celebrating Simḥat Torah once every three years only.

Simḥat Torah festivities take place both in the evening and in the morning as the *sifrei Torah*, Torah scrolls, are danced and marched around for seven **הַקָּפוֹת** - *hakafot* - circuits around the synagogue sanctuary. Some congregations will even take their dancing and singing outside onto the streets of the neighborhood. There are many different traditions related to the dancing and marching of circuits regarding their length and which songs are sung. Each community is free to celebrate this aspect of the festival in as joyous a manner as it can find.

After the scrolls are marched for seven circuits, all but one scroll is returned to the ark. That scroll is used to read from the final weekly Torah portion. This is the only occasion when the Torah is read in the evening. The following morning, the dancing and marching is repeated. However, a congregation may choose to use multiple scrolls in different venues for the first *aliyah* to the Torah because the tradition is that everyone who wishes to receive an *aliyah* to the Torah can receive one on Simḥat Torah. Many communities will join together for the final two or three *aliyot* to be read, one dedicated to the children of the community, one dedicated to a **חַתָּן תּוֹרָה** - *hatan Torah* - Torah groom (the final *aliyah* of the Torah text), and one dedicated to a **כָּלַת בְּרֵאשִׁית** - *kalat breishit* - bride of Genesis (the first *aliyah* of the new Torah cycle during which the Creation epic is read). Oftentimes, these three *aliyot* are read with the honorees standing under a makeshift *huppah* - wedding canopy - symbolically marking the union between the community and God/Torah.

For families interested in the opportunity to learn more about the history, customs, and ritual practices of Sukkot, Hoshana Rabbah, Sh’mini Atzeret, and Simḥat Torah, the following internet addresses may prove useful:

General Information:

Sukkot: <http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday5.htm>
http://www.everythingjewish.com/Sukkot/Sukkot_origins.htm
<http://learn.jtsa.edu/sukkot/>

Sh’mini Atzeret/Simḥat Torah: <http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday6.htm>
<http://www.lekarev.org/Holydays/Shim%20Az%20Sim%20tra.htm>

Laws and Customs:

http://www.everythingjewish.com/Sukkot/sukkot_laws.htm
<http://www.thejewishexchange.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=showCategory&grandparentCatID=7&parentCatID=134&catID=136>

The Sukkah:

<http://www.ou.org/about/judaism/sukkah.htm>

http://judaism.about.com/library/3_holidays/higholidays/bl_sukkot_sukkah.htm
<http://www.beingjewish.com/yomtov/sukkos/build.html>

Lulav and Etrog:

<http://www.uscj.org/metny/huntinhh/shake.html>
http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Sukkot/Overview_Sukkot_Community/Lulav_basics.htm

Should you have any questions or thoughts about any of the above Festival information, please feel free to call Rabbi Matthew Bellas at 604-736-7307 ext. 3403.