

THE CHABAD WEEKLY

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Why Be Happy

On Jewish holidays in general we have a special mitzva to rejoice and be happy, concerning the festival of Sukkot the Torah mentions rejoicing three times. (Three, in mystical Jewish teachings, is a very powerful number, connoting permanence and strength.)

Our Sukkot rejoicing begins even before the holiday commences. It actually starts the night immediately following Yom Kippur when we are certain that G-d has judged us all favorably. The joy and festive atmosphere continues throughout the eight-day Sukkot holiday and especially in the evenings when, in Jewish communities large and small, people gather together to commemorate and celebrate Simchat Beit HaShoeiva, the ancient water-drawer ceremony of Temple times.

But our happiness culminates on Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah when the actual "mitzvah of the day," the "house special" so to speak, is rejoicing.

How is it possible to command someone to rejoice? How can you legislate an emotion? A similar question is asked concerning the mitzva of loving G-d - "And you shall love the L-rd, your G-d." The explanation that Maimonides gives for this question is that the command is to meditate on things that evoke love.

What evokes joy? Singing and dancing, which is exactly what we do on Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah.

Chasidic philosophy explains that the joy that one infuses into mitzvot for the entire year is generated by the joy one creates and experiences on Simchat Torah! So powerful is the mitzva to rejoice on Simchat Torah that the Previous Rebbe said "the intense rejoicing of Simchat Torah is a vessel for the provision of one's physical needs for the whole year."

Rejoicing, being really happy on Simchat Torah, is not as tough as it might seem. True, we have just come from the High Holidays, where the "job" of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur - shaking oneself out of spiritual complacency - is an extremely difficult one. However, Jewish mystical teachings state unequivocally that the rejoicing of Simchat Torah is within every Jew's grasp, great and humble alike. (From: L'Chaim 5761, #640) lchaimweekly.org

Rain and Wind: In the Musaf prayer of Shemini Atzeret we begin saying "He causes the wind to blow and the rain to descend." This can be connected to the coming of Mashiach:

The phrase "He causes the wind (ruach) to blow" uses the same word as the verse "The spirit (ruach) of G-d hovered on the surface of the waters," and our sages say "This is the spirit of King Mashiach."

"He causes the rain (geshem) to descend" means that the coming of Mashiach actually occurs, in physicality (gashmiut-related to geshem). Not only "the spirit of Mashiach," but a soul in a body, i.e. Mashiach in the simple, literal sense in this physical world.

Moreover, "geshem" has the numerical value of 343, and this is connected to the prophecy that in the Messianic future "the light of the sun will be seven-fold as the light of the seven days." Rashi paraphrases this as "seven sevens as the light of the seven days, i.e. forty-nine sevens, equalling three hundred forty-three." (Sichat Leil Simchat Torah 5746)

The Feet of the Torah: Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch once said: the Torah wants to circle the bimah, and since it cannot do this, a Jew becomes its "feet," transporting the Torah around the reading table, just as feet transport the head.

The explanation of a Jew being the "feet" of a Torah scroll is as follows: the foot is utterly nullified to the will of the brain, as we can see from the fact that a person's thought-impulse to move his foot is instantly obeyed. A foot that does not heed the command of the brain is not healthy. Similarly the dancing of Simchat Torah expresses complete acceptance of the Heavenly yoke and submission to the Supernal Will, so that the Torah's commands are fulfilled without hesitation or deliberation. (Likkutei Sichot, vol. 4, p. 1169, Excerpted from: Days Of Awe, Days Of Joy) – chabad.org

The Hakafot were in full swing. Round and round went the circle of dancing worshippers in the little shul. I had come to watch, that's all. Somebody from the circle pulled me into the whirling mass of dancers. I turned my head to glance at the man who had "roped me in." He seemed elderly and I wondered where he got so much strength to dance and dance without end. I was astonished to see that tears were streaming down his cheeks. An inner happiness and ecstasy were written over his noble face.

"It's a long time since I had such inspiring hakafot," said my dancing partner. "It was exactly thirty years ago today, during the terrible days after the First World War. I lived in Riga then, the capital of the newly born independent Republic of Latvia.

"That night we were sheltering in a cellar. Things were not going well for the nationalists. They were losing ground and they suspected treachery. Anybody suspicious was shot, without even any investigation. Suddenly sentries saw a light in a top floor apartment. 'The spy nest has been discovered!' the sentries decided, and they rushed to the house to lay their hands on the spy.

"Whom did they rush to seize? Zalman. And who was he? I will tell you. He didn't know what it meant to be sad. Heaven knows, he had plenty of worries. But Gd had blessed him with a cheerful disposition, and seemingly nothing, absolutely nothing could break his spirit. Zalman was with us in the cellar that night. That night of all nights, when Jews rejoice and dance with the Torah we sat downcast, shivering with every explosion.

"Zalman couldn't stand it any longer. 'Brothers!' he exclaimed. 'It's Simchat Torah tonight! We must rejoice!' But his words fell flat. He looked hurt, then he suddenly remembered something. 'I see, my friends, that without a little shnapps there will be nothing doing. I have a pint of shnapps at home, which I've been saving for tonight. I'll be right back.'

"Before we could stop him Zalman climbed to the sixth floor where he lived. He picked up a candle and found the bottle. He was so happy that he danced about with the

candle burning in one hand, and the bottle in the other, forgetting all about the war, the bombardment, and the regulations.

"Now, my young friend, you understand what the sentries saw in the darkness of the night. It was just as we were preparing to celebrate hakafot that the sentries burst in, crying, 'Where is the dirty spy? Turn the spy over to us, or we will have you all shot!'

"At this moment Zalman stepped forward, bottle in hand, and calmly said: 'Officers, it was I that you saw with the light upstairs, but I was not signaling to the enemy. L...'

"Never mind, come along!' the soldiers said briskly, and marched poor Zalman off under heavy guard.

"If we had been depressed before, now we were truly grief-stricken. He would be put to the wall and shot immediately. Time dragged slowly. Suddenly we heard steps, and presently in walked--who do you think? --Zalman! We couldn't believe our eyes, but the bottle in his hand looked real enough. There were tears in all eyes.

"Stop it! Stop!' cried Zalman. 'Let's just celebrate!' But we would not start until he told us what had happened.

"Didn't I tell you, we have a great and mighty Gd?' Zalman began. 'When I was brought to headquarters the duty officer hardly looked at me. 'To be shot!' he called out. I looked at the officer for a moment, and I called out: 'Styopka! What on earth are you saying!'

"The officer gazed at me for a moment, then burst out laughing. 'What a joke! You, Zalman, a spy! Well, well, sit down and let's talk about old times. Do you remember when I used to come to your house to remove the candlesticks on Saturday mornings, and light a fire in the winter? I was a kid then, but you treated me as though I was a grown-up. I loved you, Zalman. Those were happy days in our little town, but these are grim days. You are lucky that I was on duty tonight. It was not even my turn, but I was substituting for a friend. You would have been a dead duck by now. But, what's the idea of the bottle? Is it Purim tonight?

"You ought to know better, Stepan Ivanovitsch,' says I to him 'No it's Simchat Torah', Cont...

'Sure, I remember. You go round and round in a circle dancing. Well, go back to your dancing, and say a prayer for us, Zalman. You Jews are marvellous, risking your neck for your religion, dancing in the shadow of death...'

"That was Zalman's simple story. He got a pass to come back to us. And then we began hakafot. Oh, those hakafot! I'll never forget them. Every Simchat Torah, I remember them; for the last thirty years!"(From:L'Chaim 5752, #182)

One makes Kiddush and eats and drinks in the Sukah, both by night and during the (following) day. Hakafot on Sh'mini Atzeret night. Haftora: Vay'hi K'chalot until Ul'Yisrael Amo. We do not say the (specially designated prayer) Yehi Ratzon upon leaving the Sukah. Sh'mini Atzeret and Rosh Hashana are parallel in many of the Kavanot and higher Yichudim. On Rosh Hashana, though, these are in a mode of elevation and on Sh'mini Atzeret in a mode of elicitation from On High downward. On Rosh Hashana man's Avoda is with supplication, submission and intense bitterness; on Sh'mini Atzeret it is with joy. (Rebbe's Hayom Yom Tishrei 22)

Examine and investigate and question all you can. But when it comes to actually doing, leave your skepticism behind. To get something done, you need faith. You cannot live a life based on doubts.

From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe; rendered by Tzvi Freeman.

PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY CLASSES

<u>Sunday</u>	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Berachot (men)
<u>Monday</u>	8:00 PM	Chumash (men and women)
<u>Tuesday</u>	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Succah (men)
<u>Wednesday</u>	8:30 PM	Halacha and Tanya (women)
<u>Thursday</u>	10:00 AM	Chassidus (women)
	8:00 PM	Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students
<u>Daily</u>	6:45 to 7:15 AM	Chasidus
	Between Mincha	Halacha

DAILY MINYONIM:

Shacharit: Mon-Fri 6:00 AM and 7:30 AM
Sunday 9:00 AM
Mincha/Maariv: 6:40 PM

GOOD SHABBOS & CHAG SAMEACH

SHEMINI ATZERES / SIMCHAS TORAH
SCHEDULE - 5763

Friday Night, Sept. 27

Candlelighting 6:25 PM
Mincha 6:40 PM followed by Maariv and Hakofos.

Shabbat, Sept. 28

Shacharit 9:30 AM
LATEST SHEMA 9:44 AM
Yizkor 11:00 AM
Mincha 6:35 PM
Maariv 7:20 PM followed by

Kiddush, Food, Flags, Hakofos, etc.

The food is sponsored in great part by Isaac Cohen in memory of his father, Meir Chanuka Cohen obm.

Candlelighting Not before 7:25 PM from a pre-existing flame, after saying Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodosh Lekodesh.

SHEHECHEYANU IS RECITED BOTH NIGHTS

Sunday, Sept. 29 - Simchas Torah

Shacharit 9:30 AM

HAKOFOS - ALL ARE CALLED TO THE TORAH INCLUDING CHILDREN.

Mincha 6:40 PM
Yom Tov Ends 7:25 PM

Happy Birthday to Philip Hirschhorn, Avremi Rav Noy, Malka Ita Graff, Gershon & Rachel Meisel.

Mazal Tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Michy Rav-Noy on the birth of a baby boy and to the grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. Zeev Rav-Noy.