

Beth David
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**Beth David Synagogue
Yamim Nora'im — High Holidays 2008/5769
Rosh Hashana & Yom Kippur at Home**

ROSH HASHANA AT HOME

Rosh Hashana is both a festive and solemn occasion. Its joy is spiritually disciplined by the sacred traditions of home and synagogue. Although the observance of the High Holy Days is centered primarily in the synagogue, the home is where the family prepares to meet the New Year in a spirit of faith and in a mood conducive to prayer and soul-searching.

The table is set with a white cloth and a centerpiece of flowers symbolic of purity and joy, candlesticks, wine and challot to symbolize a full, round year, as well as a dish of honey and sliced apples.

Candlelighting

The family gathers together for the lighting of candles and the Kiddush which precedes the festive meal on both Rosh Hashana nights. The following blessings are recited over the candles:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohaynu Melech Ha-olam, asher kid-shanu b'mitz-votav, v'tzivanu l'hadlik neyr shel yom tov.

Blessed are Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us by Thy commandments and instructed us to kindle the Festival lights.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohaynu Melech Ha-olam, Shehe'cheyanu, vekiyemanu, vehigiyanu lazeman hazeh.

Blessed are Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has kept us in life, preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season.

The following private prayer is adapted from the *Art Scroll Machzor*, and may be recited at candlelighting.

May it be Your will Adonai my God, and God of my ancestors, that You show favor to me (my husband, my sons, my daughters, my father, my mother) and all my relatives; and that You grant us and all Israel a good and long life; that You remember us fondly and with blessing; that You make our household complete; that You cause Your Presence to dwell among us. Grant me the privilege of raising children and grandchildren who are wise and

understanding, who love You and revere You; people of truth and kindness who will brighten the world with Torah and good deeds. Let Your countenance shine on us and grant us a year of peace. Amen

Kiddush

The Rosh Hashana Kiddush is recited (reprinted here from the *Machzor*):

Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohaynu Melech Ha-olam, borey p'ri ha-gafen.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohaynu Melech Ha-olam, asher bahar banu mi-kol am v'rom'manu mi-kol la-shon v'kid-shanu b'mitz-votav. Vaiten lanu Adonai Elohaynu b'ahava, et yom ha-zikaron ha-zeh, yom t'rua, mikra kodesh, zeyher liytzi-at mitz-ra-yim. Ki vanu vaharta v'otanu kidashta mi-kol haamim, u-d'varha emet v'ka-yam la-ad. Baruch Atah Adonai, Melech al kol ha-aretz, m-kadeysh Yisrael v'yom ha-zikaron.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohaynu Melech Ha-olam, Shehe'cheyanu vekiyemanu, vehigiyanu lazeman hazeh.

Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who has chosen us of all peoples for Divine service and distinguished us by teaching us the way of holiness through the *Mitzvot*. In love have You given us, O Lord our God, this Day of Remembrance, a day for the sounding of the Shofar, a holy convocation, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt.

You have chosen us for Your service, and have given us a sacred purpose in life; for Your word is truth and endures forever. Praised are You, O Lord, Sovereign over all the earth, who hallows Israel, and this Day of Remembrance.

Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who has kept us in life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

(Continued on page 2)

After the Kiddush *Ha-Motzi* is recited over the challot. Some dip the challah in honey.

Apple in Honey

Then all members of the family dip the apple in honey and recite the following blessing and prayer:

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Adonai Elohaynu veElohay avotaynu, sheta-hadesh alaynu shana Tovah u'metukah.



May it be Thy will, Lord our God, God of our fathers, to grant us a year from first day to last, goodly as the apple, sweet as the honey.

Second Night of Rosh Hashana

On the second night of Rosh Hashana it is customary to introduce a new fruit (mango, cactus pear, ripe fig, etc.) so that in addition to the blessing over the fruit, the *shehecheyanu* may also be recited. We recite the *shehecheyanu* whenever we celebrate a "first" in life, or even in doing something enjoyable which we haven't done since last year. Fresh Market and Harris Teeter Friendly will have unusual fruits the week preceding Rosh Hashana.

The following is taken from the *David deSola Pool Sephardic Siddur*. It may be used at the meal on either or both nights, and you may substitute your own blessing and symbolic foods (original Hebrew version available from Rabbi Havivi).

It is customary in many households to precede the family meal with special foods chosen symbolically and eaten with appropriate blessings and wishes suggested by their name or quality. The leader or all family members recite:

Dates – *Yehi ratzon milefanekha Adonai Elohaynu veElohay avotaynu sheyetamu soni'ainu.*

As we eat this *date*, may we *date* the new year that is beginning as one of happiness and blessing, and peace for all people everywhere.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who createst the fruit of the tree.

(DeSola Pool)

Pomegranates – In the coming year, may we be as rich and replete with mitzvot inspired by religion and piety as this *pomegranate* is rich and replete with seeds.

Baruch Ata Adonai Elohaynu Melech Ha'olam boreh peri ha'etz.

Pumpkin or Gourd – May the coming year grow as a *gourd* in fullness of blessing. In the year to come, if enemies *gird* at us, mayest Thou *guard* us as we eat of this *gourd* with the prayer: Blessed are Thou, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

Baruch Ata Adonai Elohaynu Melech Ha'olam boreh peri ha'adamah.

Leek – *Like* as we eat this *leek* may our *luck* never *lack* in the year to come.

Beetroot – As we *bite* this *beet*, may those who in the past have *beaten* us or sought our harm *beat* to cover in the coming year.

Sheep or Fish Head (use Gefilte) - May it be Thy will, Lord our God, God of our ancestors, that in the coming year we may go *ahead* in all we undertake. As it is written "*and the Lord will set Thee ahead and not back, and Thou shalt go only upwards and not down, when Thou wilt hearken to the commandments of the Lord Thy God which I command Thee this day to observe, and to do them.*"

The Rosh Hashana greeting - in its brief form - is **L'Shanah Tovah Tikatevu** - "May you be inscribed for a good year."

Home Hospitality for College Students

Once again, we will be inviting Triad-area college students to enjoy a home-cooked High Holy Day meal with members of our congregation. What better way to extend the friendship of our warm congregation to young men and women who may be far from home and missing the support of family during the holidays.

The Ritual Committee asks that you consider reserving one or more seats at your table for a college student to attend a meal during Rosh Hashanah, before the Kol Nidre service, or at a break-fast. If you are able to perform this mitzvah, please contact the synagogue office so we can develop a list before the holidays. Please provide the preferred date and time for your hospitality and the number of seats available.

YOM KIPPUR AT HOME

Yom Kippur is the one religious occasion which is observed almost entirely in the synagogue, yet the meal which precedes this fast (Erev Yom Kippur) is intended to be a spiritual experience for the entire family. This meal is eaten early so that the family can be in the synagogue before sundown.

Candlelighting

No kiddush is recited. Following the *Birkat ha-Mazon* (Grace after Meals), holiday candles are lit and the following blessings recited:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohaynu Melech Ha-olam, asher kid-shanu b'mitz-votav, v'tzivanu l'hadlik neyr shel Yom Ha-Kippurim.

Blessed are Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us by Thy commandments and has commanded us to kindle the Yom Kippur lights.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohaynu Melech Ha-olam, Shehe'cheyanu, vekiyemanu, vehigiyanu lazeman hazeh.

Blessed are Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has kept us in life, preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Meditation:

May the light of these candles help inspire us to love You with all our hearts. May their warmth and glow radiate kindness, harmony, and joy among the members of my family; may love and devotion bind us closer to one another and to You. *Amen*

(or)

Compassionate Creator of all life, embrace my life and my family's life with Your lovingkindness. May my children walk in Your ways, loyal to the Torah and adorned with good deeds. Bless our home and our family with peace and light and joy.

Amen

Blessing the Children

It is a beautiful tradition that before leaving for the synagogue for Kol Nidre, the parent blesses his/her children by placing his hands on their hands or hugging each one. Such blessings are introduced by the following prayer, to which the parents may add words of their own, appropriate to the age and needs of each child:

For sons: May God give you the blessings of Ephraim and Menasseh.

For daughters: May God give you the blessings of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

For Both: May God bless you and keep you. May God show you favor and be gracious to you. May God's presence be with you and give you peace.

Yahrzeit candles (Memorial Lamp)

On Erev Yom Kippur, it is customary to light a memorial lamp for deceased family members. The memorial lamps must be lit before the holiday candles are lit. Yahrzeit candles are available at our gift shop and in supermarkets in the Kosher food section. Although no *beracha* (blessing) is required, you might wish to recite the following meditation:

O God, I pray that you will keep the soul of my dear _____ united with us in the bond of life. In his/her memory, guide me so that I will live righteously, fulfilling Your will and serving our people. May his/her soul rest in peace and be remembered as a blessing.

The light should be kept in a visible place, like the kitchen counter (put a fireproof plate under it, so nothing will burn.)

Forgiveness

At this time, too, members of the family ask each other for forgiveness for the wrongs or the hurts they have done, knowingly or unknowingly, during the year.

Fasting

Although children are not obliged to fast until they are 13, it is a fine tradition that the fast be observed in part in earlier years.

Jewish law and tradition consider the maintenance of life and health as a prime religious duty. Therefore, when a person is ill or weak, a physician should be consulted about fasting. Self-denial in food and other physical pleasure is part of the tradition of Yom Kippur. Refraining from meals as well as work helps in the self-discipline of heart and mind, and prepares us to face our Creator in prayer and repentance, seeking his forgiveness and His blessings for life and health in the New Year.

Other Prohibitions:

Eating, drinking, bathing for pleasure (swimming, jacuzzi), anointing (perfuming, etc.), marital sex, and wearing leather shoes are the six additional extraordinary prohibitions. The regular Shabbat and holiday laws prohibiting lighting fire, spending money, writing, etc., are in force as well.



SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

Tashlich

Bring your kids and fill your pockets with bread crumbs! We meet at Beth David Synagogue to symbolically cast off our sins of the past year. We'll walk together leaving from Beth David at 5:00 pm, Tuesday, September 30, the **first** day of Rosh Hashana, or meet us at 203 Kemp Road East at 5:30 pm.

Ask the Rabbi

An informal session at 4:30 pm to ask Rabbi Havivi whatever questions you want, during the break on Yom Kippur. Our cantor will be in attendance; you can ask him too!

The Corners of Our Fields

Isaiah's message to us is to share what we have, in order to make our world better. Please bring food items on Kol Nidre night. On Yom Kippur we will have our annual Mazon appeal.

Neilah Shofar Blowing

As we did last year, with much commotion and joy, we will again call up to the bimah all children under 13 (young children should bring their parents) and anyone who has a shofar (real or plastic), for *Havdala* and for the final *Tekiah Gedola* shofar blast of the New Year. Bring your shofar and bring your children!

Second Day Rosh Hashana Baby Blessing

On the second day of Rosh Hashana (Wednesday, October 1), we join with those families who welcomed a new child into their homes this past year. Our shul is blessed with many infants and young children. We celebrate with their families at the specialness of these births.

As part of the Torah service, around 10:30 am, these families will be asked to rise, and we will recite a special *misheberach* blessing for them and their new children.

At the same time, we know the pain and sorrow that many have felt this year in experiencing pregnancy loss or infertility problems. These losses are some of the most private of all losses, and yet sitting next to us may be an individual or a couple grieving with a sense of loss. We mention this so that no one loses the awe or specialness of these new babies having been brought into the world—we marvel at their presence, and we pray that all who want to experience the joy of parenthood are so blessed in the near future.

Yizkor - Memorial Prayers

We will recite Yizkor memorial prayers on Yom Kippur morning. It is customary for those with deceased relatives to come to the synagogue to say *Kaddish* and recite the Yizkor prayer with the congregation. The text of the Yizkor prayer is as follows:

May God remember the soul of my _____ (English and/or Hebrew name - _____ ben/bat _____,) who has gone to his/her eternal home. In loving memory to his/her life I pledge charity to help perpetuate ideals important to him/her. Through such deeds, and through memory, is his/her soul bound up in the bond of life. May I prove myself worthy of the gift of life and the many other gifts which he/she blessed me. May these moments of meditation link me more strongly with his/her memory and with our entire family. May he/she rest eternally in dignity and peace. Amen.

You may wish to bring with you to synagogue a list of deceased relatives names, to make sure you don't leave anyone out. Yizkor need not be limited to first degree relatives. Friends and other family may be included in the Yizkor prayers.

Yizkor is recited on the last day of each of the festivals of *Sukkot*, *Pesach*, and *Shavu'ot* as well.

Birkat haGomel - Blessing After Recovery

During the Yom Kippur service we will again ask all those who were hospitalized or seriously ill during the past year, to rise and together, to publicly thank God for healing them and allowing them to celebrate another New Year.



BLUE SEATS IN THE BETH DAVID SANCTUARY

Blue seats were donated when the Beth David Sanctuary was first built in 1982, with the understanding that the donors would have those seats reserved for them for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services throughout the life of the donor. We are grateful to those donor families who helped us build Beth David in its early years. Occasionally, blue seats become available to members of our congregation as a donation opportunity. See Mike Berkelhammer for more information.

On the second day of Rosh Hashana, unoccupied blue seats are open to all daveners after 10:30 a.m. Blue seats are also open to all for Mincha and Nelia on Yom Kippur.

NEW BABIES IN OUR CONGREGATION

We wonder at the miracle of new life and are pleased to welcome these new babies in our congregation, on the second day of Rosh Hashana, Wednesday, October 1 at 10:30 am. **If we are missing anyone,** please let the synagogue office know immediately.

Heather Lindsey Grant, daughter of Tracey and Sammy Grant, granddaughter of Ellen and Lenny Samet

Phoebe Samantha Mann, daughter of Leslie and Larry Mann, granddaughter of Bobby and Bernie Mann

Bradley Paul Steele, son of Rachel Steele, grandson of Joanne and Robert Steele

Naima Shaina Earl, son of Abi Harris and Rashid Earl, grandson of Adele and Don Harris

Rebecca Madeline Berkman, daughter of Brett and Eric Berkman, granddaughter of Judith and Stanley Hammer and Keith Cushman

Zane Alexander Kaplan, son of Kim Cohen and Darren Kaplen, grandson of Cookie Ross and Jack Kaplan

Shaina Yael Luft, daughter of Dani and Ryan Luft, granddaughter of Ricki and Sidney Gray

Aerin Jane Ellsweig, daughter of Kim and Erick Ellsweig, granddaughter of Ellen and Bob Ellsweig, great-granddaughter of Evelyn Ellsweig

Hunter Ryan Chapman, son of Diane and Parke Chapman, grandson of Sandra and Kenny Greene

Caroline Ruth Robinson, daughter of Valerie and Mark Robinson, granddaughter of Susan and Freddy Robinson, great-granddaughter of Gloria Robinson

Reuben Max Mackler, son of Susie and Andrew Mackler, grandson of Janice and Steve Hymand and Leslie and Steve Mackler

Zoe Ariella Quinn, daughter of Emily and Jason Quinn

Jesse Barron Kaiser, son of Johanna and Craig Kaiser, grandson of Linda and Jerry Wearb and Stan Kasier and great-grandson of Alice and Howard Kaiser

Yehuda Schwartz, son of Shoshana and Rabbi Sender Schwartz, grandson of Vicki and Larry Strasser

Eva Lily Rieck, daughter of Hilary and John Rieck, granddaughter of Marsha and Jon Glazman

Max Cooper Kranich, son of Robin and David Kranich, grandson of Sylvia and Michael Berkelhammer

Eli Joseph Vorus, son of Tracey and Neal Vorus, grandson of Vicki and Larry Strasser

Olivia Ann Natkin, son of Sarina and Michael Natkin, grandson of Yudit and Jerry Natkin

Sarah Saffron Mandel, granddaughter of Bea and David Mandel

Clifton Hemby Gorelick, son of Gabrielle and Israel Gorelick, grandson of Pat and Paul Lieb

Owen Alexander Samet, son of Emilie and Arthur Samet, grandson of Sylvia and Norman Samet

Madeline Obadiah, daughter of Julia and Joseph Obadiah, granddaughter of Olivia and Ed Obadiah

HIGH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Monday, September 29

Erev Rosh Hashana
Services begin 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, September 30

First Day Rosh Hashana
Services begin 9:00 a.m.
Junior Congregation
10:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Babysitting
9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Tashlich – bring shofars
5:30 p.m.
(Walkers leave from BD at 5:00 p.m.)
Mincha
6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 1

Second Day Rosh Hashana
Services begin 9:00 a.m.
Baby Blessing
10:30 a.m.
Junior Congregation
10:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Babysitting
9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Friday, October 3

Kabbalat Shabbat
6:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 4

Shabbat Shuvah Services
Services begin 9:30 a.m.
Shabbat Mincha
5:45 p.m.

Sunday, October 5

Community Memorial Service
1:00 p.m. (Greensboro Hebrew Cemetery)

Wednesday, October 8

Kol Nidre
Services begin 6:00 p.m.
Babysitting
6:30-9:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 9

Yom Kippur Services
Services begin 9:00 a.m.
Junior Congregation
10:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Babysitting
9:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.
Yizkor
11:00 a.m.
Ask the Rabbi
4:30 p.m.
Mincha/Neila
5:00 p.m.
Yom Kippur Ends
7:20 p.m.

Monday, October 13

Erev Sukkot

Tuesday, October 14

First Day Sukkot
Services begin 9:00 a.m.

Wednesday, October 15

Sukkot Second Day
Services begin 9:00 a.m.

Friday, October 17

Kabbalat Shabbat
Services begin 6:00 p.m.

Shabbat, October 18

Shabbat/Chol haMoed
Presentation of 5768 BBM Certificates
Services begin 9:30 a.m.

Monday, October 20

Hoshana Rabbah
7:00 a.m.

Tuesday, October 21

Shemini Atzeret
Services begin 9:00 a.m.

Tuesday, October 21

Simchat Torah Eve
Light family dinner 6:00 p.m.
Torah Dancing 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 22

Simchat Torah Day
Services begin 9:00 a.m.

THE FESTIVAL OF SUKKOT

From: *The Jewish Holiday Home Companion*, Behrman House

In order that future generations may know that I made the Israelites live in sukkot when I brought them out of Egypt.

Leviticus 23:42,43

The Bible calls Sukkot "The Festival." Already ancient by the time of King Solomon, it was one of the most important holidays of the year. In the fall, with the harvest safely stored, the Israelites commenced a week-long celebration of thanksgiving. Many went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. There they stayed in makeshift little huts which eventually lent their name, *sukkot*, to the festival itself.

Later generations saw a symbolic connection between those huts and the tents of the Israelites in the Sinai wilderness. For them the holiday became a reminder of our ultimate dependence on God. Today we build big sturdy houses and buy our food in supermarkets, but once a year, we sit in a fragile little sukkah, open to wind and sky, and remember our own limitations.

Many commentators linked the sukkot to the huts built by our ancestors at harvest time. These farmers had to work continuously, lest the produce rot in the fields, so they built little huts close to their fields and worked from first light to darkness.

Today we sit in the sukkah at our leisure. In the pleasant evening air, we sing and eat in the sukkah, lingering as long as the weather permits. Some people even sleep overnight in their sukkah.

AT HOME

The Rabbis gave detailed instructions to sukkah builders. A sukkah must have at least three walls. These can be made of the flimsiest of materials, even cloth as long as it does not tear in strong wind. The roof is covered with leaves or branches, thick enough to give shade but sparse enough to let you see the stars at night. The structure is decorated with fruits, vegetables, artwork, or anything festive and special. The construction is done before the holiday; some families begin to build a sukkah right after breaking the fast on Yom Kippur.

A mystical tradition holds that certain of our ancestors come to sit with us in the sukkah. They are called *ushpizin* - "holy guests." When we enter the sukkah, we stand in the doorway and greet them with an ancient welcome: "I invite to

my meal, honored spiritual guests Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David." In recent times, some have expanded the list of *ushpizin* to include important women in the Bible: Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca, Leah, Miriam, Abigail, and Esther.

The *Zohar*, a collection of mystical lore, warns that the *ushpizin* will not join our celebration unless we also invite the poor. This teaching reminds us of the Jewish tradition of hospitality. Honor the *ushpizin* by inviting family, friends, and neighbors to your sukkah.

The holiday opens in the sukkah with the candle blessing, Kiddush, and Ha-Motzi. The Shehechyanu blessing is added on the first night of the festival. Then comes a special blessing for Sukkot followed by a festival meal. Interestingly, there are no particular foods associated directly with Sukkot.

IN THE SYNAGOGUE

On Sukkot, the priests of the Second Temple performed an elaborately choreographed ritual. Our own festival observance preserves some of those ancient ceremonies.

For example, many Jews come to Sukkot morning services carrying a lulav and etrog, known collectively as the "four species." The etrog is lemon-like fruit or citron. The lulav bundle contains three different types of tree twigs: palm, myrtle, and willow. Their use as ceremonial objects goes back to biblical times: "On the first day, you shall take the fruit of a goodly tree (etrog), palm branches, thick boughs of trees (myrtle), and willows and rejoice before God" (Leviticus 23:40). Some rabbis have likened each of the four species to different types of Jews; while held together they symbolize the unity of the Jewish people.

During the synagogue service the lulav is shaken in every direction - to the front, to the right, to the back, to the left, up and down - demonstrating our recognition that God is everywhere.

THE EIGHTH DAY OF SUKKOT

Sukkot closes with the holiday of Shemini Atzeret, an "Assembly of the Eighth Day." Originally Shemini Atzeret was a day of meditation and rest. Like other holidays, Shemini Atzeret took on a second day in the Diaspora. By the eleventh century, that second day became a separate holiday - the irrepressible Simchat Torah.

(Continued on page 8)

SUKKOT FOR CHILDREN

The sukkah is a perfect instrument for delighting and instructing children. Building and decorating a sukkah can be a family project in which children of all ages can participate. Paper chains, drawings, paintings, and photographs, in addition to fruits and flowers, make colorful, lively additions to the sukkah. Some families save their Rosh Hashanah cards to hang in the sukkah as well. The length of the holiday also provides many opportunities for children to invite their own guests to join family meals in the sukkah.

L'CHAIM IN THE SUKKAH

This year, we will be continuing our tradition of making l'chaim in the sukka after 5:45 PM minyan, on each day of sukkot. We are looking for donations of high quality vodka for this important ritual purpose. Please join us!



FROM THE RITUAL COMMITTEE

Modest dress, (sleeves and dress hemlines at or below the knee) is appropriate for synagogue wear, and required for adult and adolescent honorees ascending to the bima. A Kittel (High Holiday Robe) will be provided for honorees whose attire is not bima appropriate. Both men and women on the bima should wear head coverings. Wishing you *Shana Tova!*

Just a reminder:

The blue seats are reserved for those who have purchased them for the High Holidays. If you would like to sit close to the front in the folding chairs for the Holidays, get there early. You can no longer leave tallit or prayer books the night before or early that morning to reserve folding chair seats. This year, all tallit and prayer books left on seats will be removed after each service and put in a safe place. If you want to leave your tallit so you don't have to carry it, we will have a designated area for you.

Thank you

SIMCHAT TORAH

From: *The Jewish Holiday Home Companion*, published by Behrman House

Turn it (the Torah) again and again, for everything is in it.

Avot 2:8

Simchat Torah translated as "rejoicing in the Torah," celebrates the annual cycle of Torah reading. On Simchat Torah we finish the last portion of Deuteronomy and begin, again, with the first chapter of Genesis. The holiday could have evolved into a dry salute to scholarship, but it is instead a dancing and singing holiday, one that has been compared to a joyous wedding. It brings the Torah closer to all of us, scholar and nonscholar, adult and child.

IN THE SYNAGOGUE

Adults are called up to the Torah to chant the blessings, an *aliyah*. In some synagogues, the last *aliyah* is given to all the children. A large *tallit*, prayer shawl, is held over their heads and everyone in the congregation chants the Torah blessings with them.

During the service, every Torah scroll is taken out of the Ark, or *Aron Hakodesh*. Singing songs, we parade around the synagogue in a series of seven processions called *hakkafot* - circlings. By the end of the last *hakkafah*, everyone who wants to has carried the Torah. Children wave flags and march along too. Some scholars have likened these flags to the twelve tribal banners of ancient Israel.



SIMCHAT TORAH FOR CHILDREN

With its dancing, flag waving, and wonderful sense of abandon, Simchat Torah is a holiday with particular appeal for children. They can make their own flags to wave and cap the celebration with jelly apples and other sweets.