



Imrey Noam

Shemini Atzeret

Simchat Torah

October 3-4

22-23 Tishrei

5787

FESTIVAL TIMES

City	Candle lighting		Festival ends Oct. 4
	Oct. 2	Oct. 3*	
New York	6:18	7:15	7:13
Los Angeles	6:17	7:11	7:10
Chicago	6:12	7:10	7:08

Local times - All times PM
 *Oct. 3: not before the time shown;
 light from a pre-existing flame.

Stay with Me One More Day

For the festival
Rabbi Reuven Kuklin



Seven days of celebration. An eighth day with the closest of friends.

A king held a magnificent feast. For seven days, music filled the palace and tables overflowed with delicacies. When the celebration ended, the guests said goodbye. The king's closest friend also prepared to leave.

"Please wait," said the king. "Stay with me one more day. Let us sit over a cup of tea. It is your company I want."

Our Sages use this parable to explain Shemini Atzeret. During Sukkot's seven days, seventy bulls were offered in the Temple; on the eighth day, just one. G-d invites the Jewish people to remain for another day of special closeness.

Now consider: why the eighth day? The number "six" represents the physical world's six directions: east, west, north, south, above and below. The number "seven" signifies the spirit that gives it life. Hence Shabbat is the seventh day, the Sabbatical year the seventh year, and Sukkot lasts seven days.

The number "eight" goes further: we can elevate physical life itself into a vessel for holiness. Rather than merely finding time for spirituality alongside everyday life, we bring our service of G-d into it.

A boy's brit milah is performed on the eighth day. Brit means "covenant": our bodies, too, share in our bond with the Creator. Holiness embraces the whole person, body and soul.

Leviticus likewise teaches that an animal becomes eligible for a Temple offering on its eighth



day. An offering dedicates the material to G-d: again, eight points to sanctifying physical life.

In the sukkah, we practice this. Eating, drinking, resting and sleeping become part of a mitzvah. The covering recalls the Creator's protection; ordinary activities take on meaning and holiness.

Then comes the eighth day. In Israel, we return home from the sukkah. The table, dishes and routines are familiar. Yet we can return changed, ready to use ordinary things to serve G-d.

We bring holiness home: a meal gives strength to do good; our home becomes a place of Torah and kindness. Physical life need not separate us from G-d. It can bring us closer.

Return to the parable: close friends need only a cup of tea. The king's love has not diminished; expressing it no longer requires a feast. This is Shemini Atzeret's gift: knowing that we ourselves are precious to G-d, and carrying that closeness into the coming year.

ONE DAY OR TWO?

In the Diaspora, Shemini Atzeret is a festival in its own right, following Sukkot. This year it falls on Saturday, October 3, beginning on Friday evening. Simchat Torah follows on Sunday, October 4, beginning on Saturday night.

On Simchat Torah, we complete the annual Torah-reading cycle and begin it again. This is the joy behind the singing, dancing and festive circuits with the Torah scrolls.

In Israel, both celebrations take place on the same day: Saturday, October 3.

One Dance That Changed a Life

Based on a story by
Rabbi Asher Kovalsky

He never learned the stranger's name. He never forgot his kindness.

All the children sat on their fathers' shoulders. He alone stood by the entrance, in a colored shirt, without a kippah, surrounded by strangers.

His mother had brought him from Ramat Gan to a Vizhnitz synagogue to see Simchat Torah. His family was not observant; he knew almost nothing about Torah.

She went upstairs to the women's section; he entered the hall. Everyone sang and danced, wiping their brows in the heat, unwilling to stop. He wanted to join in. But how? Everything felt unfamiliar.

The sixth hakafah began, one of the festive circuits with the Torah scrolls. By Vizhnitz custom, children now climbed onto their fathers' shoulders. They abandoned their games and sweets and ran to their fathers.

The boy stayed put. Who would carry him? His father was far away. And he looked so different: everyone else wore festive white shirts and kippahs; he wore colorful, everyday clothes.

Suddenly, a hand touched his shoulder gently.

"What's your name, tzaddik? Would you like to dance? Come with me!"

The stranger found him a kippah, waited for his agreement, and lifted him onto his shoulders. Suddenly, the boy was at the heart of the dancing circle.

The man smiled, encouraged him, and praised his joyful dancing for the Torah. Moments earlier, the boy had felt alone and out of place. Now he shared everyone's joy. Someone had noticed him and made room for him.

After the hakafah, they shook hands warmly and parted. The boy never learned the man's name. But he never forgot that evening.

What was this Torah that brought people such joy? He began studying Torah on his own. In time, he built a family rooted in Torah and mitzvot.

Years later, around 2011, a visitor brought the Nadvorna Rebbe a manuscript. Now a learned, G-d-fearing Jew, he sought the Rebbe's approbation for his first book. They had not met before, so the Rebbe wished to talk and get to know him before giving his endorsement.

The visitor spoke about his family and his studies. Then he added, "But I was not always like this..."

He told the story of the boy in the colored shirt, and said, "That boy was me."

That day, the Rebbe retold the story to the community's teachers. Consider this, he said: the man who carried the boy might never know what grew from his kindness.



He noticed a lonely boy. Invited him to dance. Said a few warm words. From those moments grew an entire life, and generations to come.

That unnamed chassid shared in the man's learning, his children's education, and all the goodness they would pass on.

We cannot know what people will remember of meeting us. Sometimes it is a few moments of happiness. Sometimes those moments stay with them for a lifetime.

As we dance, let us notice the edges of the circle: a lonely child, a guest unsure where to stand. A smile, a warm word, an invitation can open a heart: come, there is room for you, too.

FINISHING THE TORAH, BEGINNING AGAIN

We read the Torah's final verses and immediately begin again. We cannot say, "We have learned it all." The reading cycle ends, but learning continues: familiar verses offer fresh insights and questions.

Maaseh Rav describes the Vilna Gaon's joyful dancing for the Torah, expressing how precious it was to him.

Carry that joy beyond the festival through a regular class, a study partner, or daily learning. Inspiration becomes a relationship built day by day.

We return to Bereishit with new questions and a desire to grow. The dancing ends, but the Torah comes home with us.

Story: Rabbi Asher Kovalsky (Dirshu), adapted from imrey.org. English translation and adaptation.
Closing article: based on Rabbi Reuven Kuklin's article "Simchat Torah," imrey.org.