

October 16th, 2014/ Tishri 5775



## **Program Guide Breakdown**

**Theme-** Each year our curriculum will focus on a theme. By centering the entire year around one overarching theme, our youth group participants will understand different characteristics and concepts that will help them achieve this lofty goal. This year's theme is Manhigut (leadership). Our goal is for our children to view themselves as leaders and to inspire them to play a leadership role every day.

**Parsha Review-** Each week group leaders will have the opportunity to roundup the parsha in two or three paragraphs. By giving over the parsha in a short and simple way, group participants will be able to grasp the parsha as a whole and to get them to think globally and conceptually.

**Parsha Questions-** No Shabbat morning group is complete without a list of parsha questions. These questions allow group participants the opportunity to win fun prizes while increasing their Torah knowledge. Questions vary from basic understanding of story line to challenging source-based material. The answers are provided as well.

**Tefillah Treasure-** Many youth directors have asked for help when it comes to teaching tefillah to children. This is a problem that not only shuls are dealing with. Schools, camps, and youth organizations are having trouble developing creative ideas to help children understand tefillah. Over the course of the year, this section will highlight one aspect of davening by providing both the Hebrew and English text, and one explanatory idea. The older the age group, the more we delve into the idea. This section is designed to help group participants follow the flow of tefillah while understanding what they are saying.

**Group Activity-** Now the fun begins! We start off with a GOAL. Each game has a purpose. The youth leaders should familiarize themselves with the goal before implementing the game.

**Discussion Portion-** After the game is over and the participants are settled down, the youth leaders should facilitate a discussion. The guidelines for this discussion are broken down into easy to use instructions. Youth leaders should review the discussion topics and goals before the start of morning groups.

**Story-** Each week we will include a story that addresses a modern day concern with lesson taken from that week's parsha.

**Jewish Leader of the Week-** In keeping with our theme of Manhigut, every week a different Jewish Leader from modern Jewish history will be highlighted. This will allow group participants to expand their knowledge of history and to learn how they can be a Jewish leader in today's society.

**Teen Minyan Packet-** This packet is filled with stories, riddles, points to ponder, and more.

**Leader Tip-** Each section has some great tips for leaders and how they should conduct that section.

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## *Shabbat Morning Groups Lesson Plan*

Time Duration	Activity	Notes
5 min	Registration	Welcome parents and children in to the group room.
10-35 min	Davening	Depending on your group size and level.
5 min	Introduction to Yearly Theme (Manhigut)	Refer to Handout
5 min	Simchat Torah Review	Prep participants for parsha questions.
10 min	Simchat Torah Questions	Prizes and awards should also be given out if participants answer correctly
2 min	Understanding the Goal	Leaders should start prepping for Shabbat activity
30 min	Activities	Your choice of two games to play
10 min	Follow Up Discussion	Refer to materials
10 min	Simchat Torah Song	This is for younger groups only.
20 min	Free Game Play	Groups can break for free game play or continue their own programing.
5 min	Story	Assemble in a circle and have participants read sections of the story out loud.
5-10 min	Discussion	Refer to handout
4 min	Jewish Leader of the Week	Refer to handout
4 min	Tefillah Treasures	Refer to Handout
5 min	Parent Pick up/Dismissal	Parents pick up their children.
<b>Total Time:</b>	<b>2 hours &amp; 40 min of programing!</b>	

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## *SIMCHAT TORAH REVIEW*

Immediately following Sukkot comes the two-day holiday of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. (In Israel, the holiday is "compressed" in a single day). Shemini Atzeret means "the eighth [day] of preservation"; the chassidic rabbis explain that the primary purpose of this holiday is to recognize the spiritual inspirations and powers that we are given during the holidays of the month of Tishrei. The Arba Minim are not taken on Shemini Atzeret. We still eat in the sukkah (according to the custom of most communities), but without making a bracha. We also say the special tefillah asking for rain on Shemini Atzeret. The second day of Shemini Atzeret is called Simchat Torah. On this day we finish, and begin again, the entire reading of the Torah. The event is marked with great rejoicing, especially during hakafot, in which we march, sing and dance with the Torah around the bimah. Every male, as well as all children, get an Aliya in celebration of this joyous holiday!

**LEADER TIP:** Simchat Torah is one of, if not the most, exciting days on the Jewish calendar. Make sure to bring your energy and excitement to groups!!

# *SIMCHAT TORAH QUESTIONS*

## Questions

1. How many books are in the Torah?
2. What is the last parsha in the Torah?
3. What is the first parsha in the Torah?
4. How many days is Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah in American? In Israel?
5. What are hakafot?
6. How many hakafot do we do on Simchat Torah?
7. How long does it take to read the entire Torah?
8. What holiday did we get the Torah?
9. Who gets an aliya on Simchat Torah?
10. What special about hagbah on Simchat Torah?

## Answers

1. 5
2. V'zot Habracha
3. Bereishit
4. 2, 1
5. When we circle around the bimah dancing and singing with the Torah
6. 7 at night and 7 during the day
7. An entire year
8. Shavuot
9. All males over bar mitzvah as well as all the children
10. Sometimes people do it backwards!

**LEADER TIP:** Make sure to have lots of candy to give out as prizes! Simchat Torah is all about the candy! (Well, kind of)

# SIMCHAT TORAH ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** To give the kids the sense of excitement and accomplishment to finishing the entire Torah.

**ACTIVITY:** Start off by talking with the kids about how Hashem gave us the greatest present ever, THE TORAH! Sometimes we get presents but they don't last very long. Either they break or they get old and we don't use them anymore. The Torah though is the greatest gift we've ever gotten since it lasts forever and we use it every single day! We read and learn the Torah almost every single day and we work hard to finish the entire thing every single year. When we finish the entire Torah, we have a HUGE celebration where we dance with the Torah and are so happy and proud of what we've accomplished!

## **Activity 1: A Journey Through the Torah**

Start off by "taking a journey together" and learning through the entire Torah with the kids. Pick a few people or stories in the Torah and go through them together. You can have kids/group leaders act them out together (make sure to come in costumes!).

1. Start off by serving the kids black and white cookies (in honor of Hashem creating light and dark), marshmallows, water or blue Powerade/Gatorade, and graham crackers (in honor of Hashem creating the sky/clouds, waters, and earth), and animals crackers (in honor of Hashem creating animals as well as the story of Noach).

2. Then continue your journey into a tent where someone dressed as Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov are sitting welcoming everyone into their tent. They will gather the kids together and tell them a little bit about themselves and their lives. Then they will take out a big object as a present for the kids. Get a cool something for your kids such as a big bag of candy, a cool new game for the group, small toys for everyone, etc. Wrap it in a bunch of bags/boxes and make it really big so that the kids have to take off all the layers. Pass it around while singing a Simchat Torah song (Torah Torah is always a great one!) when the song stops, the kid holding the object must take off one layer of the present. Keep going until the present is completely unwrapped!

3. The final step of the journey is a visit to the Yam Suf. Bring in blue blankets, sheets, towels, table cloths and create a big "Yam Suf" for the kids. Moshe Rabbeinu (dressed up of course) will meet the group there and tell the kids a little bit about how the Jews were slaves in Mitzrayim and Hashem set them free and they are about to cross the Yam Suf on their way to the Land of Israel! In order for Hashem to perform the miracle of splitting the sea for us, we have to listen to what Hashem says and always follow his mitzvot. Moshe will then lead a round or two of "Hashem (Simon) Says".

Once all the kids are all excited, Hashem will split the “Yam Suf” and the kids will cross through!

### **Activity 2- Dance Party!**

Now that we’ve learned through the Torah, it’s time to party! If you could get some sort of those small plush Torahs, that would be great. Sing songs with the kids and dance with them and make it into a real dance party! Feel free to play dancing games such as Musical Chairs or Freeze Dance to get the party going!

**DISCUSSION:** Simchat Torah is an extremely exciting time in shul. Kids love dancing with their parents, waving their flags, and getting as much candy as humanly possible. This program really makes them feel like they themselves actually learned through the entire Torah. Talk to the kids about how important the Torah is to our lives and how we wouldn’t be able to live without it. Ask them what people or stories they know in the Torah and which ones they like the best. Feel free to add characters throughout your journey and even have them join you throughout the rest of it! Also, bring back your characters throughout the year for visits and make sure the kid’s excitement for the Torah stays alive all year long! Mazal tov on finishing the Torah!

**LEADER TIP:** You can even give out candy to the kids and have them eat it right away. Then point out to them that the candy was exciting but now it’s already gone! The Torah stays with us forever! We can use it every single day and it never leaves us!

# SIMCHAT TORAH STORY

Henryk was very young in 1945, when the War ended and solitary survivors tried frantically to trace their relatives. He had spent what seemed to be most of his life with his nanny, who had hidden him away from the Nazis at his father's request. There was great personal risk involved, but the woman had readily taken it, as she loved the boy.

All the Jews were being killed, and Henryk's nanny did not think for a moment that the father, Joseph Foxman, would survive the infamous destruction of the Vilna Ghetto. He would surely have been transferred to Auschwitz — and everyone knew that nobody ever came back from Auschwitz. She therefore had no scruples about adopting the boy, having him baptized into the Catholic Church and taught catechism by the local priest.

It was Simchat Torah when his father came to take him. The heartbroken nanny had packed all his clothing and his small catechism book, stressing to the father that the boy had become a good Catholic. Joseph Foxman took his son by the hand and led him directly to the Great Synagogue of Vilna. On the way, he told his son that he was a Jew and that his name was Avraham.

Not far from the house, they passed the church and the boy reverently crossed himself, causing his father great anguish. Just then, a priest emerged who knew the boy, and when Henryk rushed over to kiss his hand, the priest spoke to him, reminding him of his Catholic faith.

Everything inside of Joseph wanted to drag his son away from the priest and from the church. But he knew that this was not the way to do things. He nodded to the priest, holding his son more closely. After all, these people had harbored his child and saved the child's life. He had to show his son Judaism, living Judaism, and in this way all these foreign beliefs would be naturally abandoned and forgotten.

They entered the Great Synagogue of Vilna, now a remnant of a past, vibrant Jewish era. There they found some Jewish survivors from Auschwitz who had made their way back to Vilna and were now rebuilding their lives and their Jewish spirits. Amid the stark reality of their suffering and terrible loss, in much diminished numbers, they were singing and dancing with real joy while celebrating Simchat Torah.

Avraham stared wide-eyed around him and picked up a tattered prayer book with a touch of affection. Something deep inside of him responded to the atmosphere, and he

was happy to be there with the father he barely knew. He held back, though, from joining the dancing.

A Jewish man wearing a Soviet Army uniform could not take his eyes off the boy, and he came over to Joseph. "Is this child... Jewish?" he asked, a touch of awe in his voice.

The father answered that the boy was Jewish and introduced his son. As the soldier stared at Henryk-Avraham, he fought to hold back tears. "Over these four terrible years, I have traveled thousands of miles, and this is the first live Jewish child I have come across in all this time. Would you like to dance with me on my shoulders?" he asked the boy, who was staring back at him, fascinated.

The father nodded permission, and the soldier hoisted the boy high onto his shoulders. With tears now coursing down his cheeks and a heart full of real joy, the soldier joined in the dancing.

"This is my Torah scroll," he cried.

Abe Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League -- the Avraham in our story -- remembers this as his first conscious feeling of a connection with Judaism and of being a Jew.

**LEADER TIP:** What is it like to learn or even hold a Torah? Do you feel a connection? Why is it so important for our everyday lives to constantly involve ourselves with the Torah?



# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Moshe Dayan

(May 20, 1915- October 16, 1981)



Moshe Dayan joined the Haganah, Israel's underground forces, in 1939 and rose to command the Israeli forces in Jerusalem in the War of Independence. His rise in the army was impressive: in 1950-51 he was head of the Southern Command and in 1952-53, Chief of Operations. In 1953-58 Dayan was appointed IDF Chief of Staff and strengthened the forces. He was elected to the Knesset in 1959 and served till 1981; appointments also included Minister of Agriculture, Defense and Foreign Minister. Dayan will forever be remembered wearing a black patch over his left eye as a result of a sniper wound that happened in 1941 during fighting for the British in World War II.

**LEADER TIP:** Would you rather serve in the army and help Israel physically or serve in the Knesset and help Israel politically? What other ways can you help Israel?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Hakafot

The Simchat Torah festivities begin with Hakafot right after maariv. All the shul's Torahs are taken out of the Aron and are carried around the shul in a series of seven Hakafot (circles). Although each circle needs only to go around one circle around the bimah, the dancing and singing with the Torah usually lasts much longer. We dance and sing with the Torahs in one of the most happy and exciting times in the Jewish calendar. We do Hakafot at night and then another seven of them in the morning right after Shacharit. Hakafot are a ton of fun singing and dancing with our entire shul. Be on the lookout for lots of candy as well!

**LEADER TIP:** Get your kids involved with dancing in shul! The more you're into it, the more the kids will be! Make your own circle in the middle of Hakafot with your kids!

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11. What is the person to be called up to the Torah to finish the last part of the Torah called?
12. What is the person to be called up to the Torah to start the first part of the Torah called?
13. What is it called when all the children come up to get an Aliya?
14. Where is the haftorah for Simchat Torah from?
15. What special tefillah do we say on Shemini Atzeret?

## Answers

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## **ACTIVITY: A Journey Through the Torah**

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Create different stations where the kids must accomplish different tasks in order to complete the entire Torah. At each station, they will receive a few puzzle pieces where at the end they will put it all together and feel the sense of accomplishment of completing the entire Torah.

The puzzle should be something like a picture of a Torah, a big Mazal Tov, a message that they get a huge prize now that they finished it all, etc. Whatever it is, make sure its super exciting for them! The kids will go through different stations representing different parts of the Torah. Make sure to discuss with them about what each station represents and the story behind it.

1. The first station is about creation. Have the kids “create” the world. Bring in cookies or cupcakes for the kids to decorate. There should be seven of them, each one representing a different day of creation. Have the kids split up and decorate them based on what was created that day.
  2. The second station is Akeidat Yitzchak. Avraham and Yitzchak will be there telling the kids the story about what happened and how it’s always important to have trust in Hashem no matter what. Have the kids all pair up and do the “trust fall”. (Make sure to let the kids know not to joke around and let their friends fall.) Each partner will take turns falling backwards into their partners arms showing that they trust each other no matter what.
  3. This station is the Jews in Mitzrayim. Have Paroh and Moshe at this station. When the Jews were in Mitzrayim they built lots of pyramids. Have the kids have a cup stacking competition. If there are enough cups for all kids to participate then great. If not, have a few representatives and do a few rounds of it. They must stack the cups into a pyramid and back into a straight cup stacks 10 times as fast as they can. You can also make it into a relay race sort of thing!
  4. The last stop is right before getting into the land of Israel. (Unfortunately Moshe cant join in Israel but he will tell you all about that.) In order to enter into the land of Israel, we need to make sure were prepared. Have one of the group leaders dress up as an Israeli Commander and run army training for the kids. Make them do push-ups and different drills to make sure they’re prepared. You can also do Israeli trivia as well!
- Once they finish their journey, have the kids put together their puzzle/message and it’s time to celebrate! Give out candy and prizes and sing and dance with the kids! We just finished the Torah! Woo!!

**DISCUSSION:** Simchat Torah is an extremely exciting time in shul. Kids love dancing with their parents, waving their flags, and getting as much candy as humanly possible. This program really makes them feel like they themselves actually learned through the entire Torah. Talk to the kids about how important the Torah is to our lives and how we wouldn't be able to live without it. Ask them what people or stories they know in the Torah and which ones they like the best. Feel free to add characters throughout your journey and even have them join you throughout the rest of it! Also, bring back your characters throughout the year for visits and make sure the kid's excitement for the Torah stays alive all year long! Mazal tov on finishing the Torah!

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**LEADER TIP:** What is it like to learn or even hold a Torah? Do you feel a connection? Why is it so important for our everyday lives to constantly involve ourselves with the Torah?



# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Moshe Dayan

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Moshe Dayan was an Israeli military leader who later became an advocate for peace. He played a key role in four wars and helped negotiate the Israel-Egypt peace treaty. Dayan was born on kibbutz Deganya Alef, near the Kinneret. When he was only 14 years old, Dayan joined the Haganah, an underground organization that defended Jewish settlements from Arab attacks. Dayan was wounded in battle in Lebanon and lost his left eye. He began to wear the black eye-patch that later became his trademark. He remained active in the Haganah until 1948. Dayan's activities in the 1948 War of Independence began when he commanded the defense of Jewish settlements in the Jordan Valley. He later commanded the battalion that attacked the city of Lydda and helped stop Egyptian forces on the southern front. In August 1948, he was appointed commander on the Jerusalem front. In 1949, he participated in peace talks with Jordan. Dayan's military expertise allowed him to rise to the rank of chief of operations at General Headquarters in 1952, and, in 1953, he was elected Chief of Staff of the armed forces.

**LEADER TIP:** Would you rather serve in the army and help Israel physically or serve in the Knesset and help Israel politically? What other ways can you help Israel?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Hakafot

The best part of Simchat Torah is the dancing with the Torah during hakafot (lit. "circles"). The hakafot are certainly one of the highlights on the Jewish calendar.

The hakafot are celebrated on the night of Simchat Torah and then again the following morning. Before the dancing starts, a set of seventeen pesukim, called Atah Ha'raita, is said. Different members of the shul say each line at a time out loud and the rest of the shul repeats after them.

After Atah Ha'raita, we take out the Torahs from the Aron. Members of the shul are honored with holding the Torahs. The leader of the Hakafa leads the circle around the bimah singing a short repeat after me tefillah and starts off the singing and dancing. We do seven Hakafot at night, and then another seven in the morning after Shacharit with a different person leading each Hakafah.

**LEADER TIP:** Get your kids involved with dancing in shul! The more you're into it, the more the kids will be! Make your own circle in the middle of Hakafot with your kids!

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**LEADER TIP:** Simchat Torah is one of, if not the most, exciting days on the Jewish calendar. Make sure to bring your energy and excitement to groups!!

# SIMCHAT TORAH QUESTIONS

## Questions

1. Who gets an aliya on Simchat Torah?
2. What special about hagbah on Simchat Torah?
3. What is the person to be called up to the Torah to finish the last part of the Torah called?
4. What is the person to be called up to the Torah to start the first part of the Torah called?
5. What is it called when all the children come up to get an Aliya?
6. Where is the haftorah for Simchat Torah from?
7. What special tefillah do we say on Shemini Atzeret?
8. How many sefer Torahs are taken out for laining on Simchat Torah?
9. When is the only time we lain at night?
10. What parsha do we read over and over until all males in shul get an Aliya?

## Answers

1. All males over bar mitzvah as well as all the children
2. Sometimes people do it backwards!
3. Chatan Torah
4. Chatan Bereishit
5. Kol Ha'nearim
6. Yehoshua
7. Tefillat Geshem
8. 3
9. Simchat Torah night after hakafot
10. V'zot Habracha

**LEADER TIP:** Make sure to have lots of candy to give out as prizes! Simchat Torah is all about the candy! (Well, kind of)

## V'Zot HaBracha

1. Before giving the Torah, Hashem went to Seir and Mount Paran. Why?  
33:2 - In order to offer the Torah to the people of Seir (Eisav's descendants) and the people of Paran (Yishmael's descendants).
2. Why is Yehuda blessed immediately after Reuven?  
33:7 - Because both of them admitted their sin.
3. What covenant (*brit*) did Levi keep?  
33:9 - *Brit Mila* (circumcision).

4. Why was Binyamin blessed before Yosef?  
33:12 - Because the *Beit Hamikdash*, built in Binyamin's portion, was "more beloved" than the *Mishkan* built in Yosef's portion.
5. Which Tribe received the "best" portion of *Eretz Yisrael*?  
33:13 - Yosef.
6. Besides the sun, which celestial body helps fruit to ripen?  
33:14 - The moon.
7. If there were only 7 Canaanite nations, why did Yehoshua need to conquer 31 kings?  
33:17 - Since the Land was so desirable, all foreign kings and governments acquired palaces and property there.
8. What three things did the land of Zevulun possess?  
33:19 - *Tarit*, a type of fish; *Chilazon*, a mollusk whose blood was needed for the *techelet* (a dye needed for *tzitzit*); and a type of sand needed for white glass.
9. What did visiting merchants see that inspired them to convert to Judaism?  
33:19 - They saw that the Jews serve one G-d and follow a unified kashrut code.
10. The tribe of Gad saw "the beginning -- *reishit*." The beginning of what?  
33:21 - They saw the beginning of the conquest of the land, and chose that as its portion.
11. The source of the Jordan River was in the territory of which tribe?  
33:22 - Dan.
12. Which tribe possessed the *Kinneret*?  
33:23 - Naftali.
13. The daughters of which tribe married High Priests and Kings?  
33:24 - Asher.
14. Who wrote the last eight verses in the Torah, starting with the verse "and Moshe died"?  
34:5 - According to one opinion, Yehoshua wrote it. Rabbi Meir says Moshe himself wrote it with tears.
15. Who buried Moshe?  
34:6 - According to one opinion, Hashem buried Moshe. According to Rabbi Yishmael, Moshe buried himself.

# SIMCHAT TORAH ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** To learn the difference between the celebration of Simchat Torah and Shavuot

## **ACTIVITY: Game 1: “The Adverb Game”**

One volunteer leaves the room, others choose an adverb, e.g., “slowly.” When the volunteer returns, he must find out what the adverb is by asking people to do things “that way,” e.g., “Shake hands that way” (so they would shake hands very slowly). If a member doesn’t want to, or can’t do what s/he says, he or she should therefore say, “I don’t want to,” very slowly. After each command the volunteer makes a guess at the word; s/he can continue until s/he guesses - or gives up. You can do a few rounds of this using different volunteers and different adverbs/descriptions.

## **Game 2: “Act It”**

Split up the group into smaller groups depending on how big the group is. Then give each smaller group a piece of paper with about 10-15 words on it. They must then come up with a skit or song, about 3-4 minutes, that contains every single word on the list!

## **Game 3: “Taboo”**

Split up the group into two teams. Choose one person from a team to be the first clue giver. They must try and get their teammates to say a specific given word. They are also given five words that they are NOT allowed to use to explain the target word. If they use any of those five words, the target word is disqualified. They must try and get through as many target words as possible in 45 seconds. Keep switching off teams and the teams will switch off who is the clue giver. The team with the most words guessed wins!

**DISCUSSION:** At first glance, it seems a little confusing as to why we need two different holidays to celebrate the Torah. We celebrate both on Simchat Torah as well as Shavuot. Why is this? If we look closer though, we’re really celebrating two totally different things. On Shavuot, we celebrate that we received the Torah, the Torah was **given** to us. It’s the anniversary of the day we stood at Har Sinai, entered into an eternal covenant with Hashem, and were given the Aseret Hadibrot as well as the rest of the Torah. It is the celebration of Hashem **giving** the Torah to us. The main actor in this event is the giver- Hashem. Simchat Torah, on the other hand, celebrates **our** completing the reading of the entire Torah and beginning to read it again. On the same day, we finish and restart the Torah representing that the cycle never stops. Therefore, the main actor in this event is the people reading and studying the Torah- us, Am Yisrael.

In these games, the kids are given specific things to do, which is exciting because the games are fun to play. But if the kids were just to take the things given to them and not actually do anything with them, then the words or tasks would be pretty pointless. It's exciting to get the tasks because the games are exciting, but that excitement won't last long at all if the kids don't do anything with it. We need to use what we're given as well as our own efforts to make what we're doing worth while

The two holidays complement each other beautifully and complete each other. Shavuot emphasizes Hashem's part in choosing the Jewish people and blessing us with the greatest gift in the world. Simchat Torah emphasizes **our part** in working hard studying, learning, and internalizing that incredible gift we like to call the Torah. What point would there be in Hashem giving us the Torah if there was no one there to learn and live it? On Shavuot, all we had to do is say "We shall obey". On Simchat Torah, on the other hand, we had to spend a year reading the entire Torah. That is a tremendous accomplishment that well deserves a huge celebration. The fact that we have both Shavuot and Simchat Torah teaches us that both Hashem and Am Yisrael play a vital role in the Torah. We work together, Am Yisrael together, as well as together with Hashem, in order to fill our lives with the greatest *simcha* and satisfaction possible. The more effort and dedication we put in, the more Hashem puts in as well, and together we can really make it the happiest of Simchat Torahs yet.

**LEADER TIP:** You can even give out candy to the kids and have them eat it right away. Then point out to them that the candy was exciting but now it's already gone! The Torah stays with us forever! We can use it every single day and it never leaves us!

# SIMCHAT TORAH STORY

Henryk was very young in 1945, when the War ended and solitary survivors tried frantically to trace their relatives. He had spent what seemed to be most of his life with his nanny, who had hidden him away from the Nazis at his father's request. There was great personal risk involved, but the woman had readily taken it, as she loved the boy.

All the Jews were being killed, and Henryk's nanny did not think for a moment that the father, Joseph Foxman, would survive the infamous destruction of the Vilna Ghetto. He would surely have been transferred to Auschwitz — and everyone knew that nobody ever came back from Auschwitz. She therefore had no scruples about adopting the boy, having him baptized into the Catholic Church and taught catechism by the local priest.

It was Simchat Torah when his father came to take him. The heartbroken nanny had packed all his clothing and his small catechism book, stressing to the father that the boy had become a good Catholic. Joseph Foxman took his son by the hand and led him directly to the Great Synagogue of Vilna. On the way, he told his son that he was a Jew and that his name was Avraham.

Not far from the house, they passed the church and the boy reverently crossed himself, causing his father great anguish. Just then, a priest emerged who knew the boy, and when Henryk rushed over to kiss his hand, the priest spoke to him, reminding him of his Catholic faith.

Everything inside of Joseph wanted to drag his son away from the priest and from the church. But he knew that this was not the way to do things. He nodded to the priest, holding his son more closely. After all, these people had harbored his child and saved the child's life. He had to show his son Judaism, living Judaism, and in this way all these foreign beliefs would be naturally abandoned and forgotten.

They entered the Great Synagogue of Vilna, now a remnant of a past, vibrant Jewish era. There they found some Jewish survivors from Auschwitz who had made their way back to Vilna and were now rebuilding their lives and their Jewish spirits. Amid the stark reality of their suffering and terrible loss, in much diminished numbers, they were singing and dancing with real joy while celebrating Simchat Torah.

Avraham stared wide-eyed around him and picked up a tattered prayer book with a touch of affection. Something deep inside of him responded to the atmosphere, and he



was happy to be there with the father he barely knew. He held back, though, from joining the dancing.

A Jewish man wearing a Soviet Army uniform could not take his eyes off the boy, and he came over to Joseph. "Is this child... Jewish?" he asked, a touch of awe in his voice.

The father answered that the boy was Jewish and introduced his son. As the soldier stared at Henryk-Avraham, he fought to hold back tears. "Over these four terrible years, I have traveled thousands of miles, and this is the first live Jewish child I have come across in all this time. Would you like to dance with me on my shoulders?" he asked the boy, who was staring back at him, fascinated.

The father nodded permission, and the soldier hoisted the boy high onto his shoulders. With tears now coursing down his cheeks and a heart full of real joy, the soldier joined in the dancing.

"This is my Torah scroll," he cried.

Abe Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League -- the Avraham in our story -- remembers this as his first conscious feeling of a connection with Judaism and of being a Jew.

**LEADER TIP:** What is it like to learn or even hold a Torah? Do you feel a connection? Why is it so important for our everyday lives to constantly involve ourselves with the Torah?

# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Moshe Dayan

(May 20, 1915- October 16, 1981)



Moshe Dayan was an Israeli military leader who later became an advocate for peace. He played a key role in four wars and helped negotiate the Israel-Egypt peace treaty. Dayan was born on kibbutz Deganya Alef, near the Kinneret. When he was only 14 years old, Dayan joined the Haganah, an underground organization that defended Jewish settlements from Arab attacks. Dayan was wounded in battle in Lebanon and lost his left eye. He began to wear the black eye-patch that later became his trademark. He remained active in the Haganah until 1948. Dayan's activities in the 1948 War of Independence began when he commanded the defense of Jewish settlements in the Jordan Valley. He later commanded the battalion that attacked the city of Lydda and helped stop Egyptian forces on the southern front. In August 1948, he was appointed commander on the Jerusalem front. In 1949, he participated in peace talks with Jordan. Dayan's military expertise allowed him to rise to the rank of chief of operations at General Headquarters in 1952, and, in 1953, he was elected Chief of Staff of the armed forces.

Dayan became Chief of Staff during a time of severe Arab belligerence. Despite the military peace of 1949, the surrounding Arab nations were still aggressive supporting terrorism in Israel. Under Dayan's command, the Israeli military launched raids in Gaza and other missions, causing heavy casualties to the Egyptians, Syrians, and other Arab populations.

Dayan left the military in 1958 and entered his second career — politics. He joined Israel's Labor Party, Mapai, and was elected to the Knesset in 1959. He served as Minister of Agriculture in the government of David Ben-Gurion from 1959 until 1964. In 1964, Dayan resigned as Minister of Agriculture after an argument with new Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and joined Ben-Gurion in forming a new party called Rafi (Alliance of Israel's Workers). Dayan's reputation as an effective leader grew when he was appointed Minister of Defense under Levi Eshkol just in time for the Six-Day War in 1967 against Egypt, Jordan and Syria. When the Syrians were shelling Israeli villages in Upper Galilee, Dayan was the one who made the decision to launch a full-scale attack against the Syrians. It was also Dayan who ended the fighting by arranging a cease-fire with Syria.

On May 14, 1979, Dayan was diagnosed with colon cancer. He died on October 16, 1981, in Tel Aviv and was buried in Nahalal, the moshav where he was raised.

**LEADER TIP:** Would you rather serve in the army and help Israel physically or serve in the Kenesset and help Israel politically? What other ways can you help Israel?

# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Hakafot

The best part of Simchat Torah is the dancing with the Torah during hakafot (lit. "circles"). The hakafot are certainly one of the highlights on the Jewish calendar.

The hakafot are celebrated on the night of Simchat Torah and then again the following morning. Before the dancing starts, a set of seventeen pesukim, called Atah Ha'raita, is said. Different members of the shul say each line at a time out loud and the rest of the shul repeats after them.

After Atah Ha'raita, we take out the Torahs from the Aron. Members of the shul are honored with holding the Torahs. The leader of the Hakafa leads the circle around the bimah singing a short repeat after me tefillah and starts off the singing and dancing. We do seven Hakafot at night, and then another seven in the morning after Shacharit with a different person leading each Hakafah.

The Chassidic rabbos explain that the Torahs are rolled shut and wrapped in their velvet coverings for the duration of the hakafot celebrations. We don't celebrate by sitting down and studying the Torah's holy words. This is because the celebration includes every Jew, no matter his or her level of Torah knowledge or ability to understand Torah's words. The Torah is the heritage of every Jew – the day-old infant is as essentially connected to the Torah as the respected scholar – and every Jew is equally entitled to celebrate on this special day.

**LEADER TIP:** Get your kids involved with dancing in shul! The more you're into it, the more the kids will be! Make your own circle in the middle of Hakafot with your kids!

October 16th, 2014/ Tishri 5775



## This Week in Jewish History

October 12, 1843

### **Bnai Brith was Founded**

B'nai B'rith International is the oldest Jewish service organization in the world. B'nai B'rith states that it is committed to the security and continuity of the Jewish people and the State of Israel and combating anti-semitism and bigotry. Its mission is to unite people of the Jewish faith and to enhance Jewish identity through strengthening Jewish family life, to provide broad-based services for the benefit of senior citizens, and to facilitate advocacy and action on behalf of Jews throughout the world. Although the organization's historic roots stem from a system of fraternal lodges and units in

the late 20th century, as fraternal organizations declined throughout the United States, the organization evolved into a dual system of both lodges and units. The membership pattern became more common to other contemporary organizations of members affiliated by contribution in addition to formal dues paying members. In recent years, the organization reported more than 200,000 members and supporters in more than 50 countries and a budget of \$14,000,000. Nearly 95% of the membership is in the United States. B'nai B'rith International is affiliated with the World Jewish Congress.



### ***FIND...***

- **V'zot Habracha**
- **Bereishit**
- **Kol HaNearim**
- **Chatan**
- **Torah**
- **Aliya**
- **Shemini**
- **Atzeret**

### **DVAR TORAH- SIMCHAT TORAH**

After Chavah and Adam ate from the tree that was forbidden for them, we are told: וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֶל הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אַיֶּכָּה הָיָיתָ? "Hashem called out to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'" (Gen. 3,9) The Torah is not a history book. It was given for all generations and for all people. This question of "Where are you" is something which is meant for us also and we should take it seriously as if it is being asked of us at all times. We should constantly take an accounting of where we are, what do we look for, and how do we try to obtain it. The first question we should ask ourselves is, "What we seek, is it really what we need and what we want?" The Book of Proverbs tells us: מַיִם גְּנוּבִים יִמְתְּקוּ, "Stolen waters are sweet..." (Proverbs 9,17) We often feel that we must have something only because we know we shouldn't. That is what Hashem asked Adam: הֲמִן הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לִבְלֹתִי אָכַלְתָּ? "...have you eaten of the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?" (Gen. 3.11) Adam ate from the tree, not so much because he needed it, but because it was forbidden to him. We must be careful to seek that which we need and not what we feel we want simply because others have it or we are challenged because it is there.

## TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK

### WHO WAS THE CHIEF RABBI OF ISRAEL BEFORE THE STATE WAS DECLARED?

Email your answers to [SAMMYS@YOUNGISRAEL.ORG](mailto:SAMMYS@YOUNGISRAEL.ORG) along with your **NAME** and **AGE** for a chance to win **AWESOME PRIZES!** Each correct answer will enter your name into a raffle that will happen once a month. Behatzlacha!

#### THIS JUST IN!

- **Every person has a unique tongue print.**
- **Intelligent people have more zinc and copper in their hair.**
- **The world's youngest parents were 8 and 9 and lived in China in 1910.**
- **The youngest Pope was 11 years old.**

**For more info please feel free to contact us at [sammys@youngisrael.org](mailto:sammys@youngisrael.org)**

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#### Parsha Points to Ponder...

The final verse of the Torah is a statement attesting to *"the strong hand and the awesome power that Moses performed before the eyes of all Israel"* (Deut. 34:12). What specifically was this "awesome deed" that Moses performed? Rashi tells us that upon seeing the idolatrous Golden Calf, Moses shattered the tablets of the Ten Commandments. It was the right thing to do at the time. It is interesting that Moses is first introduced in the Torah with the story of his killing an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating a Jew. Notice that both the first thing the Torah tells us about Moses, and the last thing the Torah tells us about Moses, are incidents where he expresses anger. Was Moses really prone to anger? We know that Moses was exceedingly righteous and humble. And actually God approved of these two acts. So what's the explanation? The answer is that Moses had mastered the trait of anger, so that when he did express something that looked like anger, it was actually very deliberate and measured. It's all an issue of control. If your child misbehaves and you start yelling, that's typically anger "out of control." But if your child is about to stick a fork into a light socket, you might decide to yell in order to impress upon him the degree of danger. In other words, one can express anger, without being truly "angry." That's what Moses did. This behavior is even more amazing given a Midrash (quoted by the commentator, Tiferes Yisrael) which says that Moses was born with an inclination toward anger, but through working on himself was able to become master over it. And that, the Torah testifies, is truly "awesome."



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