

924

Connecting the Jewish People

Torah Tidbits

The Sukkot Simchat Torah Shabbat B'reishit issue

Smile at this: Our 3-day Yom Tov is behind us; in Chutz LaAretz they have two more 3-day Chagim coming!

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- [2] As we enter the Sukka
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ParshaPix Explanations inside



Word of the Month

On Shabbat B'reishit we bench Rosh Chodesh Marcheshvan. FYI, B'reishit is the only sedra that is ALWAYS Shabbat M'vorchim. Rosh Chodesh will be on FRI & Shabbat (October 8,9). Remember, we're talking about the Shabbat after Simchat Torah. Do be confused by this double/triple issue.

ר"ח מרחשון יהיה ביום ששי וביום שבת קודש הפא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה: המולד יהיה ביום ששי, בשעה שמונה בבוקר, עשרים דקות ושני חלקים.



See the Candle lighting & Havdala sheet in the Pull-Out Pages folder for texts, notes, and times

(Lots of other good stuff there too)

Reminder: On Sh'mini Atzeret (Sep. 30) (a.k.a. Simchat Torah in Israel) in Musaf, we start to say

מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם.

and continue until Musaf of the first day of Pesach - for a total of 643 of the 1244 AMIDA-count.

Remember though, that we continue to say **V'TEIN B'RACHA** in BAREICH ALEINU until Maariv of the 7th of Marcheshvan (Thursday night, October 14th)

TAL UMATAR outside of Israel begins Dec. 5

Ranges are 17 days. WED-FRI
14-30 Tishrei (Sep 22 - Oct 8)

Earliest Talit & T'filin	4:37-4:47am
Sunrise	5:28-5:38am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 7:53-7:56am)	8:29-8:32am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:00-9:00am)	9:30-9:30am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:32-11:26¼am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	12:03pm - 11:57am
Plag Mincha	4:20-4:03pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 5:35-5:15pm)	5:40-5:20pm

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Not on Shabbat; yes on Shabbat

Blue leaves trim fog

We say to G-d: Mi casa SUKAsa

Charmed dreams in my area vote

LEAD TIDBIT not cont. from the Front Page, but just here

VATITEN LANU HASHEM ELOKEINU B'AHAVA

"And G-d gave us with love" - We say it every holiday in each Amida - 4 of them, except on Yom Kippur when we say it 5 times... (add one for Kiddush and we end up with five times each Yom Tov). Add to that a bunch more for Musaf on Chol HaMoed.

The opportunity, the mitzva, to do T'shuva is no less than G-d throwing us a lifesaver so that we might continue to live. Throughout Aseret Y'mei T'shuva, we proclaimed that G-d is a MELECH CHAFEITZ BACHAYIM, a king who genuinely wants us to live.

And what did He give us? Each of the holidays. So on Yom Kippur we proclaim that G-d gave us Yom Kippur with love. Yom Kippur, a day of atonement, of prayer and fasting, of T'shuva - this day, G-d gave us, not out of anger for our misdeeds - communal and individual - but as a gift that shows His great love for B'nei Yisrael.

Yom Kippur is the lifesaver. Sukkot are the gifts.

There are at least two different gifts. First, is that in an atmosphere of Simchat Yom Tov, we are able to increase the quality of our T'shuva, from T'shuva MiYir'a (repentance motivated by fear of G-d, fear of punishment) to T'shuva MeiAhava (repentance motivated by love of G-d and the knowledge that He loves us.

Right before VATITEN LANU, we declare that G-d has chosen us from among all the nations, and He has loved us and favored us, has elevated us above all other "tongues", and has sanctified us with His mitzvot...

Second gift is that He doesn't just forgive us when we ask (and mean) for it. He forgives us with Joy, demonstrating this by following Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur with Z'man Simchateinu.

It is very significant and important for us to realize and really understand that G-d teaches us to return to Him with love. And it helps our attitude in our personal quest to better ourselves and strengthen our commitment to Torah and Mitzvot.

If the timing of Sukkot was to place it as far away from Pesach as possible - so that our commemoration of the Exodus and our appreciation of G-d from His taking us out can be all year round... then the placing of Sukkot so soon after Yom Kippur was also intended to see and feel the awe of the time be flavored by the joy of the time. Fact is, Yom Kippur is the time of our joy - we just needed Sukkot and Simchat Torah to show us that.

And then five days later, we say it again. This time we acknowledge that G-d has given us Sukkot, the season of our rejoicing - again, with love.

It's like a parent saving a child's life and then giving him additional gifts.

SUKKOT

"Readings"

First day of Sukkot

Two Torahs...

In the first Torah we read from Parshat Emor, Vayikra 23, the portion of the Festivals. We actually start the reading several p'sukim earlier with the mitzvot of not taking an animal from its mother to use it as a korban before it is 8 days old. And the prohibition of slaughtering an animal and its offspring on the same day. This second mitzva applies to korbanot and to "personal" use of animals for food. The first mitzva is specifically for korbanot (but its spirit belongs to "regular" animals too).

Next the Torah teaches us the mitzvot of Kiddush HaShem and its opposite.

Perhaps we can understand why Chazal "backed us up" these 8 p'sukim, rather than leaving us just with the portion of the cycle of the Chagim. First of all, on Chag there are many animals used both for Korbanot and for the dinner table. The two mitzvot included in this opening portion of the Torah reading serve as a reminder that we have rules and regulations that go along with our commandments and permission to use the animals for our own purposes. The "reminder" of Kiddush HaShem and Chilul HaShem, serves us well to focus our SIMCHA in the proper direction and not allow ourselves to get carried away by improper joyful behavior. The final pasuk before the presentation of the

Chagim reminds us that all the Holidays are commemorative of the Exodus from Egypt. Now, we are ready to continue with the reading about the Holidays themselves.

The Torah begins with Shabbat, followed by Pesach, the Omer, Shavuot, Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot. This 52-pasuk portion is read for 5 people, the number of Aliyot assigned to Yom Tov.

The straightforward (P'SHAT) reading of the presentation of the cycle of the Holidays is that it begins with Shabbat. We acknowledge this in the regular Friday night Kiddush when we refer to Shabbat as RISHON HU L'MIKRA'EI KODESH, the first of the days called Sacred, meaning the days whose sanctity is accompanied by a prohibition of Melacha.

There is another way of understanding the opening p'sukim of PARSHAT HAMO'ADIM, the portion of the festivals. (attributed to the GR"A).

Speak to the people of Israel... these are My Holidays (which will be detailed shortly). On six of them, there are some Melachot that may be done, but on the seventh of the Holidays, no manner of Melacha is permitted, it is a SHABBAT SHABBATON. Rosh HaShana, first day of Sukkot, Shmini Atzeret, 1st and 7th day of Pesach, and Shavuot are the 6 holy days on which some Melacha is permitted. But on Yom Kippur... no melacha at all, it is Shabbat Shabbaton...

[SIDE POINT: The term SHABBAT SHABBATON occurs 6 times in the Torah. Twice it is definitely referring to Yom Kippur. Twice it is definitely

referring to our weekly Shabbat. Its mention in Emor is debated - let's split it down the middle. This gives Shabbat 2½ references and Yom Kippur 2½. That's 5 together. The sixth time, Shabbat Shabbaton refers to the Sh'mita year.]

Maftir is read from a second Torah, from Bamidbar 29:12-16, Parshat Pinchas. It is a 5-pasuk presentation of the Korban Musaf of the first day of Sukkot.

It is significant to note that because the number of bulls in the Musaf of the days of Sukkot change - 13 on the first day, then 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, and 7 on the seventh day - the Torah identifies each day of Sukkot as its own. In other words, there is mention of "And on the second day", "and on the third day", etc. This is not the case with Pesach. The Musaf of each day was the same as the first, and the Torah does not announce, "and on the second day of Pesach..." It could have, but it doesn't. (The Torah, for example, did not use "ditto" marks for the gifts of the Tribal Leaders, even though the gifts were identical. But with Pesach, it did. KA'EILEH...) Consequently, we view each day of Sukkot as a separate Chag (sort of) and each day gets full Hallel. Days 2 thru 7 of Pesach are not considered distinct from the first day and as a result Hallel is required only on the first day. What subsequently began as a custom to recite Hallel throughout Pesach has now become required, but the essential difference of that Hallel is preserved by our skipping the first 11 p'sukim in each of two of the chapters among the six that make up Hallel.

Haftara of the first day of Sukkot comes from Zecharya and contains the famous prophecy of the time in the future when other nations will recognize the One G-d

and those nations that persecuted Israel will be severely punished. There is a universal message of Sukkot in that people from other nations will also be challenged with the mitzva of Sukka. The universal nature of Sukkot can also be seen by the 70 bulls of the Musaf of the seven days, which correspond to the 70 nations of the ancient world (that descend from No'ach). So too, the fact that the world is judged for rainfall on Sukkot gives the holiday a universal flavor, since rain is not just for the Jewish people.

Chol HaMoed Torah reading

Friday (day 2), [Shabbat Chol HaMoed is treated separately after this section] Sunday (day 4), Monday (day 5), Tuesday (day 6), and Wednesday (day 7, Hoshana Rabba), is the "same" Torah reading format (not the same p'sukim). One Torah is taken out (as opposed to Chol HaMoed Pesach when two Torahs are used each day). Four people are called to the Torah and the same set of p'sukim is read for each of the Aliyot. Each Aliya consists of three p'sukim (the minimum length for an Aliya), comes from Parshat Pinchas, and deals with the Musaf offering of each day.

(In Chutz LaAretz, the Chol HaMoed reading is a bit different, reflecting the concept of S'FEIKA D'YOMA, doubt as to the actual date of a given day - this was the origin of the second day of Yom Tov in the Diaspora. Although today there is no doubt, certain aspects of davening and other halachic issues continue to be based on the original doubt situation. The most significant issue on this score is "eating in the sukka on Shmini Atzeret". Remember, we are talking about outside of Eretz Yisrael.

That some people do, some don't, some make Kiddush in one place and continue their meal elsewhere, night, day, both... reflect the combination of (pretend) SAFEK (doubt) and other factors, which often contradict each other.)

There is no haftara on Chol HaMoed (except on Shabbat). Our Sages did not want to burden the people who had to work (hopefully in a permitted way) during Chol HaMoed with extra shul-time.

Shabbat Chol HaMoed

KOHELET is read on Shabbat Chol HaMoed Sukkot (unless there is none, in which case it is read on the first day of Sukkot - Shabbat - in Israel, and on Shmini Atzeret - also a Shabbat, in Chutz LaAretz). It is read before the reading of the Torah. When Kohelet is read from a parchment megila (common in J'lem), brachot are recited on the reading. No brachot are said if it is read from a printed book. The megila, written by Shlomo HaMelech in his later years, takes a serious look at the Life we all live, and his conclusions boil down to there being nothing of real value in this World. Except to be G-d-fearing. Kohelet provides a sobering balance to potentially inappropriate levity of the Chag and hopefully focuses our joy in the proper direction.

Two Torahs...

We call seven people to the first Torah, reading from Parshat Ki Tisa, specifically Shmot 33:12 through 34:26, a total of 38 p'sukim. It is the portion following the sin of the golden calf, after Moshe pleads on behalf of the People, after G-d agrees to forgive the People, and after Moshe

smashes (or drops) the Luchot, destroys the Eigel, and castigates the people (and kills the 3000 primary violators). Moshe Rabeinu asks for a greater knowledge and intimacy with G-d. G-d gives Moshe a greater glimpse of His Essence than He had previously shown Moshe, but only a glimpse. Then G-d commands Moshe to cut a new set of Luchot, which He will engrave as He had previously done with the first set. Then we read about the 13 Divine Attributes, which is followed by a summary of the SHALOSH REGALIM. The portion ends with the prohibition of eating meat & milk mixtures.

MAFTIR is read from a second Torah, from Parshat Pinchas. It is a 5-pasuk presentation of the Korban Musaf of the third day of Sukkot.

Haftara for Shabbat Chol HaMoed comes from Yechezkeil (38:18-39:16), a total of 21 p'sukim. Yechezkel describes a battle in the end of time (before the coming of the Mashiach) when armies hostile to the Jewish People will attack and be thwarted by G-d. The defeat of what has become known as GOG UMAGOG, will result in the worldwide acknowledgment of the greatness of the G-d of Israel as the One G-d. There is a tradition that this war will occur on Sukkot, hence its choice as the haftara. Sukkot shares the universal message of G-d in the world.

At Mincha on Shabbat Chol HaMoed we read the first part of the upcoming regularly scheduled sedra - V'ZOT HABRACHA. Usually, there is at least a week until we get to read the full sedra, sometimes two or three weeks. This time, the Shabbat afternoon preview is less than a week before we read the

whole sedra.

SIMCHAT TORAH

Just to clarify (and confuse): The Torah's name for the 8th day of Sukkot which is really its own separate Holiday, is SHMINI ATZERET. That's what we call it in the Amida and in Yaaleh V'yavo. Either Yom HaShmini, Chag HaAtzeret Hazeh or Yom Chag Shmini Atzeret HaZeh - depends on your Nusach. In Chutz LaAretz, where two days are observed, the second day of Shmini Atzeret took on the name of Simchat Torah when that occasion was linked to Shmini Atzeret. Both days are called Shmini Atzeret in Kiddush and davening. In Israel where only one day of Yom Tov is observed, the one day carries both names, but in Kiddush and davening it is always called only Shmini Atzeret.

On the night of Simchat Torah, after HAKAFOT (see special sheet in the Pull-Out section of this Torah Tidbits), we read the beginning of VZOT HABRACHA. Some call three people, some call five. This is the only night of the year that we read from the Torah, after joyously dancing with the Torahs and making Hakafot around the Bima. It reflects the joy and love we feel towards the Torah on this day of its celebration. The Old Minhag Yerushalayim (GR"A) is not to read the Torah on Simchat Torah night. Most shuls do read it.

[And, just for your knowledge, Shulchan Aruch does mention Torah reading on Leil Simchat Torah, but not from V'zot HaBracha. Rather different Parshiyot are read for each Aliya - indicating that this night's reading is not "regular" Torah reading, but rather a "celebration" of Torah on this special Chag.]

Three Torahs...

On Simchat Torah morning, after Hakafot, we read the sedra of V'Zot HaBracha. This is the only "Parshat HaShavua" that is not read on Shabbat (except in Eretz Yisrael when Simchat Torah falls on Shabbat). Five people are called to the Torah, as on all Yamim Tovim. The sedra, however, is not completed with these 5 Aliyot.

(In most shuls,) these five portions are reread over and over again, many times, often with several Torahs being read simultaneously at different locations in shul. This allows all men to receive an Aliya on Simchat Torah in a shorter period of time than it would take if reading from one Torah only. Of course, all of this depends on the size of the congregation.

There is a custom that the last Aliya before Chatan Torah is given to one of the oldest men in shul, and with him, all young boys (who cannot take their own Aliya) are invited to share this KOL HA'NE'ARIM Aliya.

Following this, the **Chatan Torah** is called for the last Aliya in the Torah. A chupa is often made over the Bima by four tall guys with a talit, as we complete the reading of the Torah.

After V'zot HaBracha (Sefer D'varim and the whole Torah) is completed, the Torah is lifted, closed, and "dressed" and a second Torah is read from.

This time, the honor of the Aliya goes to the **Chatan B'reishit** for whom will be read the beginning of the Torah. We never finish with the Torah. We begin it as soon as we get to the end. This is the "real" reason for our great

joy. We celebrate, not the conclusion of the Torah, but the wonderful feeling of beginning again and of being the people to whom the Torah was given and for whom the Torah is our way of life. Again a chupa is made for this Aliya.

The whole first chapter of B'reishit is read, plus the first four p'sukim of the 2nd chapter, which describes the first Shabbat.

Maftir, read from a third Torah, comes from Parshat Pinchas and presents the Musaf of Shmini Atzeret.

The **Haftara** for Simchat Torah picks up where the Torah left off - with the beginning of the Book of Yehoshua. Aside from it being the natural choice for Haftara of V'zot HaBracha because it is its continuation, it also contains G-d's encouragement to Yehoshua to cling to the Torah and immerse himself in it day and night. This portion is particularly suited for Simchat Torah.

Ramban says that Sukkot is set at the other side of the year from Pesach to emphasize that we must appreciate G-d's having taken us out of Egypt and protecting us in the Wilderness - ALL YEAR ROUND. Pesach and Sukkot are each a 7-day commemoration of the Exodus, each begins on the 15th day of the first month of the year (both Nissan and Tishrei are considered first months).

The Vilna Gaon says that after the Sin of the Golden Calf, the Heavenly Clouds left the people. He calculates that they returned on 15 Tishrei, hence that date for Sukkot and the Sukka.

CHIZUK ^{AND} IDUD

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively)

There are two mitzvot that were given to the Jewish People that are performed by entering completely into them - they are Sukka and Eretz Yisrael.

A hint (REMEZ) to this can be found in T'hilim 76:3 -

וַיְהִי בְשֵׁלֵם סֶכּוֹ וּמִשְׁנֵתוֹ בְּצִיּוֹן:

["plain" translation: "And in Shaleim (Salem, another name for Jerusalem) is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place is in Zion."]

On this REMEZ level: VAYHI V'SHALEIM - which mitzva is it that is done with SH'LEIMUT (completeness), with the whole body and being? SUKO - one's Sukka, UM-ONATO B'TZIYON, and when one dwells in Zion, in Eretz Yisrael - that is the mitzva of YISHUV ERETZ YISRAEL.

Our special guest columnist this week?
The Vilna Gaon

A chassidic rebbe added a thought on this pasuk from his personal experience on a rainy Sukkot in Chutz LaAretz. Where can one do the mitzva of Sukka bishleimut (fully)? When M'ONATO B'TZIYON, only when he lives in Eretz Yisrael.

R' Yosef Ber of Brisk: The phrase Simchat Torah literally means the joy of the Torah, to teach us that it isn't enough for us to be happy with the Torah, the Torah must be happy with us.

Zman Simchateinu. Sounds less specific than the other two: Cheiruteinu for Pesach and Matan Torah for Shavuot. Don't all three Chagim require Joy?

Yes, but Sukkot earns its nickname. Sukkot is the joyous parallel to Pesach - both commemorate the Exodus, but Sukkot's joy is not mixed with the reliving Egyptian slavery. Shmini Atzeret is parallel to Shavuot - with the joy of Simchat Torah but not the trepidation that goes along with the Sinai experience. Sukkot, with the G'mar Din on Hoshana Rabba and the judgment for rainfall, lends its joyful atmosphere to what is otherwise a scary, awe-filled experience of Repentance. Truly, a time of our joy.

TTTRIDDLES

Last issue's (Yom Kippur) TTtriddles:

[1] **He liked iron mix**

Take the letters of LIKED IRON and mix them. They spell KOL NIDREI.

[2] **Ten on Seven not Five**

TEN of Tishrei on day SEVEN of the week, on which we may NOT do any of the FIVE inuyim.

[3] **One of five... twice! (OBG)**

One of the five INUYIM is NE'ILAT HASANDAL, the wearing of leather footwear. One of the five t'filot of the day is NE'ILA. (Oldie but Goodie)

[4] **Mentioned in Avraham's song**

The Shabbat Z'mira, KI ESHM'RA SHABBAT was composed by a man named Avraham, as can be found in the first letters of each stanza. In his

song, Yom Kippur is mentioned as the only exception to the no fasting on Shabbat rule.

[5] **6/3, 10/7, 1/11**

The 6th day of the 3rd month is VAV SIVAN, Shavuot. The 10th day of the 7th month is Yom Kippur. The first day of the 11th month is Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat. These are the three dates of MATAN TORAH, receiving the Torah. Shavuot, of course; on Yom Kippur, we received the second set of Luchot, the ones that remained intact; on R"Ch Sh'vat Moshe Rabeinu began his final review of the Torah, shortly before his death.

[6] **No Kiddush, but said anyway**

Many people begin the daytime kiddush of Shabbat with IM TASHIV MISHABBAT RAGLECHA... Those two p'sukim end off the haftara of Yom Kippur, so they are said even though there is no kiddush.

[7] **"Good and upright is HaShem; therefore he instructs sinners in the way."**

This is the English translation of T'hilim 25:8. The gimatriya of the entire pasuk is 1244. See next TTtriddle.

[8] **How many Amidot in 5771?**

Not a TTtriddle - a straightforward question. 385 days of the year x 3 Amidot a day = 1155. Add 55 Shabbat Musafs = 1210. 16 non-Shabbat Yom Tov and Chol HaMoed Musafs = 1226. 17 non-Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Musafs = 1243. Ne'ila = 1244. (In Chul, +3)

Divrei Menachem

V'zot HaBracha - 'And this is the Blessing'. This beautiful opening line introduces us to the blessing that Moshe bestowed upon Bnei Yisrael before his ultimate demise. Like his forefather Yaakov who blessed the people as they began their long march through history, Moshe now blesses the tribes as they near the end of their travels in the wilderness. Like Yaakov, Moshe mentions each of the ancient tribes; but, more so, he bestows upon the whole nation a blessing that should lift the spirits of each and every Jew - even in our times:

"Fortunate are you, O Israel. Who is like you - a people delivered by Hashem, the shield of your help?" (D'varim 33:29). And earlier, after describing how G-d will eventually vanquish Israel's enemies, Moshe proclaims: "Thus Israel shall dwell secure, solitary, in the likeness of Yaakov, in a land of grain and wine" (ibid. 33:28).

"In the likeness of Yaakov" refers to Hashem's promise that He will bring us back to the Land of our Fathers (Rashi), paralleling, perhaps, the self-imposed exile and eventual return. And while the notion of dwelling secure is self-understood, the concept of "dwelling alone" must surely imply that even as we, in our lifetime, join the family of nations, our Torah way of life and moral standards must perforce serve as singular beacon of light in a dark world of deliberate deceit and damning disgrace.

VEBBE REBBE

QUESTION: *I have heard that one should drink wine on Chol HaMo'ed, but not all religious people do so. I enjoy drinking wine occasionally but it doesn't particularly "speak to me". Should I be careful to drink it on Chol HaMo'ed, and, if so, how often and how much?*

ANSWER: There is an obligation of simcha (enjoyment) on the holidays, including all of Chol Hamo'ed (Sukka 48a; Rambam, Yom Tov 6:17). The classical way to reach that simcha was to partake in the special festival korbanot called shalmei simcha (ibid.). The question is what happens nowadays when there are no korbanot.

The Rambam (ibid.:17-18) says that in addition or, perhaps, in place of korbanot, simcha is reached through different physical things for different types of people, including treats for children, clothes for women, and meat and wine for men. The Beit Yosef (ibid.) is troubled with the Rambam's mention of meat, as the gemara (Pesachim 109a) says that specifically wine takes the place of shalmei simcha. In any case, the Rambam seems to understand the consumption of wine as a way to fulfill a Torah-level obligation of simcha (Sha'agat Aryeh 65). Tosafot (Mo'ed Katan 14b) differs, saying that nowadays, in the absence of korbanot, simcha on the holidays is only rabbinic.

Either way, there seems to be some obligation to drink wine throughout the chag, and we agree that not all observant men are careful to do so. Actually, a gemara (Sukka 8a) seems to assume that not everyone has wine. In discussing the possibility of making a Shehecheyanu throughout the chag if one did not do so on Yom Tov, the gemara (Sukka 47b) is skeptical whether, if wine were necessary for the b'racha, it would be readily available. As Rashi (ad loc.) explains: "wine is not found for all people on Chol Hamo'ed." The Mishneh Halachot (VII 78) tries to say that one is obligated to have wine, but it is nevertheless not readily found, (not a simple reading of the gemara). The Nishmat Adam's (II 104:1) claim that one has a choice between wine and meat also would answer the question. The Shulchan Aruch does not mention an independent obligation to partake of wine on Chol Hamo'ed, but says in regard to Yom Tov, that the meal is based around wine (Orach Chayim 529:1). Yet, as the Magen Avraham (530:1) points out, on Chol Hamo'ed there is not an absolute obligation to have a full meal (for which reason if one forgets to say Ya'aleh v'Yavo in Birkat HaMazon he does not repeat - Orach Chayim 188:7).

A logical compromise, implied by the Sha'agat Aryeh (ibid.) and spelled out by the Moadim U'Zmanim (VII 119), is as follows. While the mitzva from the Torah to have simcha on Yom Tov was accomplished in the Beit HaMikdash with the shalmei simcha, nowa-

days we must look for other options. The gemara (Pesachim 109a) brought a proof that wine is considered something that is good at making one happy. The Rambam found basis for meat being an important component of simcha as well. However, these are subjective components, but there are other alternatives, which for some people are much more appropriate. The gemara already says that, to generalize, it is appropriate to give clothes to women and sweets to children. However, even for adult males, other foods or experiences may effectively be an alternative to wine. If one does not enjoy wine, then alternatives are certainly called for.

It is a good practice for one who enjoys wine to drink daily a revi'it (3-4 oz.) together with a Chol Hamo'ed meal in order to certainly fulfill the mitzva and perhaps fulfill it in the optimal way (Rav Moshe Feinstein, cited in Zichron Shlomo (Zucker), pg. 33; see also Chol HaMo'ed K'hilchato 1:12). Grape juice is not a replacement, as a mild level of intoxication is part of the simcha element (based on Rashi, Bava Metzia 66b). Some say that any alcoholic beverage is sufficient for simcha (see Piskei Teshuvot 529:9). However, one who does not drink wine but does other things to make each day festive, need not feel guilty.

Portion from the Portion

HAPPINESS

Three times the Torah tells us to be happy on Succot: V'SAMACHTA b'chagecha (D'varim 16:14), v'hayita ach SAMEI'ACH" (:15), and USMACHTEM... shiv'at yamim (Vayikra 23:40). In this day and age when so many people are unhappy and researchers even predict that the number one killer (more than heart disease or cancer) will be depression, we wonder where this happiness will come from on Succot and is it so easy to achieve?

In the past, Succot had an agricultural component - it is the harvest festival. After a farmer brings in his harvest after so much hard work and agony over the chance that it may not grow properly, he is able to rejoice. This happiness stems from the gratitude he has to G-d for allowing his crop to succeed.

Another reason for happiness is a spiritual one. The person feels happy with the knowledge that during the Yamim Nora'im his repentance has been accepted by Hashem.

Another reason for this happiness can be found when analyzing the experience we had in the first Succot in history. We followed G-d into the "terrifying desert, where there were snakes, vipers, scorpions and thirst" (Dvarim 8:15). Living under the difficult conditions of the desert for 40 years taught us a proper perspective on hardship. This is the lesson of the Succa. We can be happy with very

little. We don't need a twenty room smart house with swimming pool, and fancy cars to be happy. We make ourselves unhappy by falsely believing we need all these things (Guide to the Perplexed 3:12). Living in the desert, and living in our Succot for a week each year teach us that we can be happy with whatever Hashem gives us - SAMEI'ACH b'chelko.

Another aspect of happiness is stated in the verse V'samachta b'chagecha ... You shall rejoice on your festival along with your son and daughter, your male and female servants, and the Levite, proselyte, orphan and widow from your settlements" (Dvarim 16:14). One can only truly rejoice when he knows that everyone else around him is also able to rejoice. If one knows that a widowed mother of 11 doesn't have food for her children he will not be able to rejoice fully. By inviting people who might be less fortunate than oneself (e.g. those who may not have found their soul mate yet, single parents raising their children alone, new olim who have no family in Israel, or an elderly couple whose children live far away), they are better able to enjoy the holiday and also increase their own simcha on Succot. Being altruistic makes one happy. Just eating together with family and friends is a way to increase simcha as well as modern psychology has shown that happy people are very sociable.

These lessons that we can learn from our own holiday of Succot are being taught by positive psychologists such as Martin Seligman today. May we learn how to take the happiness that we enjoy on Succot and experience it

in our day to day lives.

THE RABBIS said EIN SIMCHA ELA B'VASAR VAYAYIN - one rejoices with meat and wine". Therefore, the recipe is for meat cooked with wine.

BRAISED BEEF IN RED WINE

- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1½ kilo boneless beef chuck roast
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium carrot, finely chopped
- 2 celery ribs, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 4 sprigs thyme
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- 2 cups dry, full-bodied red wine
- 2 cups water

Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 165°C. Heat oil in oven proof pot over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking. Meanwhile, pat meat dry and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Brown meat in hot oil on all sides, about 10 minutes total. Transfer to a plate. Add onion, carrot, and celery and sauté, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are softened and golden brown, 10-12 minutes. Add garlic, thyme, and rosemary and sauté, stirring, until garlic begins to soften and turn golden, about 2 more minutes. Stir in tomato paste and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Add wine and boil until liquid is reduced by about half, about 5 minutes. Add water and simmer. Return meat along with any juices accumulated on plate to pot. Cover

pot and put in oven. Braise until meat is very tender, 2½-3 hours.

Transfer meat to a cutting board. Skim fat from surface of sauce and discard along with herb stems. Boil sauce until reduced by about one third, about 5 minutes, then season with salt. Cut meat across the grain into 1.2cm thick slices and return to sauce. Since beef improves in flavor if made 3 days ahead this can be cooked in advance. Cool completely in sauce, uncovered, then chill in sauce, covered.

Sukkot has a double identity. It is one of the Three Regalim. And it is also one of the Yamim Nora'im, the three Tishrei Yamim Tovim. It facilitates our higher level of T'shuva from Love, whereas Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur "attract" T'shuva from Fear.

V'ZOT HABRACHA

A Godly Man

We all have lifelong interests. For some of us, they are hobbies or avocations. For others, they may be art or literature. My lifelong interest has been philosophy, and more specifically, theology.

I ask you, dear reader, to ponder what your lifelong interests have been. I further ask that you try to identify the specific time in your early life that this interest began to develop. Was it in childhood, or adolescence, or not until adulthood? And where did these auspicious beginnings occur? In a classroom, in a library, or perhaps on the playground?

For me, my lifelong fascination with matters theological began on the beach. My parents, may they rest in peace, took us each year for summer vacation to Rockaway Beach, NY. We rented some rooms there in a large house which belonged to an old Irish Catholic couple, Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher. After spending an entire year in a totally Jewish environment, those summers exposed us to individuals of a very different religious background. Believe me, it was a powerful learning experience in many ways.

For me, but perhaps not for my sisters, it was where I first began to learn, not just about theology, but about comparative theology. This

came about because of my introduction to the Fletchers' granddaughter, Judith. I was then eight or nine, and Judith perhaps a year or so younger.

We had long talks, Judith and I, and they were often about God and the subject of prayer. I remember the shock I experienced when I learned about Judith's conception of God, which she had of course learned in the Roman Catholic parochial school she attended. In the simplistic discourse of eight-year-olds, it became apparent that her God was once a man, of flesh and blood. My God was very much "without a body and without any semblance of a body."

I brought my discovery of the differences between my God and Judith's God to the teacher my parents would hire each summer to make sure that I did some daily Torah study. He told me that I had made a very important discovery at a much younger age than most Jewish boys. He told me that I had learned about the basic difference between Judaism and Christianity. That discussion with my teacher so long ago launched my lifelong interest in the nature of the Jewish belief in God, and the profound differences between that belief and Christian belief.

The final portion of the entire Torah, V'zot HaB'racha, which we read this year on Simchat Torah - on Thursday or Friday, as the case may be, on Yom Tov, and not on Shabbat - has always brought back memories of that summer long ago

and of that profound early learning experience. This is because the opening verse of this Parsha contains the phrase "Moshe, the man of God, bade the Israelites farewell before he died."

Moshe, for the first time in the entire Chumash, is called "man of God", *Ish haElohim*, an appellation provoking the question, "Was he a man, or was he a God? Was he different from other men, perhaps more godly than they? Was he in some way himself a deity?"

How emphatically are our possible misconceptions about Moshe dispelled by the second half of the phrase, "before he died"! (D'varim 33:1) Moshe was utterly human, he was mortal, he died, and as we learn later in the portion was buried. Right here we have the essential difference between our faith and the Christian faith. There is one God, and to use the language of theology, He is incorporeal; that is, He has no body and no physical form whatsoever. He is totally different from all of His creations. God is not man and no man can be God.

For the past several weeks, we have all been engaged in prayer. The lesson which follows from the aforementioned basic principle of our faith is that the Jew prays to God alone, and does not pray to any human being, living or dead, however inspiring that person may be. We do not pray to men or women, and we do not even pray to angels. We need no intermediaries in our prayers; we pray to God

alone.

For the past several weeks, we have all been engaged in T'shuva: self examination, confession, and repentance. In this process too, we need no human intercessors. We introspect before God, we confess directly to Him, and we repent, or return, to Him. How unlike is our process of T'shuva from the experience that Judith told me about: the confessional of the Roman Catholic Christian believer. She dreaded those confessionals and the requirement that she recount her childish sins to another person. How different was my childhood experience of VIDUI, confession, before an all-forgiving God who understood and tolerated my spiritual failings.

The end of this Torah portion drives home a related lesson. Moshe was buried in a grave, and yet "no one knows his burial place to this day" (D'varim 34:6). Why has Moshe's burial place remained unknown for all these millennia? Wouldn't it have been only fitting for him to have an impressive headstone, a monument that we could visit when we wanted to pay tribute to our greatest leader? It has been suggested that the reason the location of Moshe's grave has been hidden from us is precisely so that we do not go there to pay tribute. Had we been able to visit his grave, we might very well have begun to worship the monument under which he lies buried. We may very well have yielded to the temptation of our Christian fellows,

and have turned a man into a God.

As the long Holy Day period draws to a close, it is imperative that we call to mind this basic lesson in theology, the lesson I personally learned so very long ago. In Judaism, all men are mortal, all are flesh and blood, all can sin, and all are subject to human shortcomings.

As the Holy Days of Tishrei draw to a close, a period during which we have all had our spiritual experiences and have learned so many religious lessons, we cannot lose sight of this basic lesson, the one which distinguishes our faith from its "daughter faith".

In the words of the composer of the Yigdal prayer, found near the beginning of every Jewish prayer book, of every siddur:

"Great is the living God and praised.

He exists, and His existence is beyond time.

He is one, and there is no unity like His.

Unfathomable, His Oneness is infinite.

He has neither bodily form nor substance;

His holiness is beyond compare."

Due to constraints of space, time, printing power, folding power... and more, this B'reishit Sedra Summary is woefully abridged

B'reishit STATS

First of the 54 sedras; first of 12 sedras in B'reishit

Written on 241 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 9th

23 Parshiyot; 10 open, 13 closed, ranks 6th

146 p'sukim - ranks 8th (5th in B'reishit), same as Mikeitz; but Mikeitz is longer in lines, words, letters

1931 words - ranks 8th (5th in B'reishit)

7235 letters - ranks 11th (5th in B'reishit)

MITZVOT

One (positive) mitzva in B'reishit (Be fruitful...)

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

Kohen First Aliya, 34 p'sukim - 1:1-2:3

This Aliya contains the first account of Creation.

[P>1:1 (5)] The first parsha contains the "summary" statement of Creation (or the first phase of Creation - different opinions) and the account of Day One.

SDT: *Baal HaTurim points out that the Gimatriya of B'REISHIT BARA is 1116, as is the numeric value of the phrase: B'ROSH HASHANA NIV'RA - on RH it (the world) was created. Furthermore, the letters of B'reishit rearrange to spell ALEF B'TISHREI, the first of the month of Tishrei (or B'ALEF TISHREI - on the first of Tishrei - same thing),*

"confirming" the opinion that the world was created in Tishrei (R. Eliezer), rather than in Nissan, as the other opinion holds (R. Yehoshua). If we could prove things with Gimatriyas and anagrams, then R. Eliezer would "win" the dispute, but as it is, the dispute as to when the world was created remains a dispute - and halachically, it leans towards Nissan.

"In the beginning, G-d created the Heavens and the Earth. And the Earth..."

Did that happen on day 1 of Creation? Or is something before Day 1 being described?

Here is one possible answer. The first two p'sukim of B'reishit describe the totally, exclusively Divine aspect of Creation of Something from Nothing — YEISH MEI'AYIN. Before "B'reishit", perhaps nothing existed — except G-d. With the Divine Command of B'reishit, everything that now exists came into existence for the first time. All matter, all energy, thoughts, concepts, time — everything (sort of like a BIG BANG!). According to this point of view, SHAMAYIM and ARETZ mean everything in the universe.

The first form that all of Creation had was TOHU VAVOHU, chaos. That's the second pasuk. And, this stage of Creation occurred BEFORE Day One. Not on the first day - before Day One. And not a day before, not an instant before nor an eon before. It is pointless speculation to attempt to give a time-frame for the first two p'sukim, because TIME has meaning only in the context of the ordered world that began to take shape on Day 1. No wonder we are not supposed to concern ourselves with what had happened before the world was created!

"And G-d said: Let there be light..."

Thus begins the Torah's description of Days 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. And what happened on those days? G-d put everything in order, distinguished one thing from another. It was creation of Something from Something. YEISH MI'YEISH. Forming, shaping. The kind of Creation that we emulate in our lives.

And how long was one of these days of Creation? Maybe they each were a thousand years long. Or an eon. Or maybe they each were 24 hours long. Either that Torah talks "our language" or not. Take your pick. Either way fits.

Without going into detail, here is a breakdown of the first Aliya for your consideration.

2 p'sukim, as mentioned above, for the first phase of creation. Notwithstanding the argument above that broke these two p'sukim off of the description of the first day (so to speak), they are part of the first PARSHA, together with the creation of Light, etc. Which might support other "understandings" of the "process" of Creation.

3 p'sukim for Day 1, the creation of light, the separation of light and darkness, and their being identified as day and night. One KI TOV. The day is called YOM ECHAD (cardinal number) rather than RISHON (ordinal number), because RISHON has meaning only if there is a SHENI, which there wasn't yet.

[P>1:6 (3)] The next parsha is for the Second Day of Creation. The creation of the Heavens and the separation of the Upper and Lower waters. (Some say that angels and

various forces were created on the 2nd day too.)

[P>1:9 (5)] The next parsha contains the Third day of Creation which consists of two "sections". First, two p'sukim for the "gathering of the lower waters" into different areas and the formation of dry land. And the "naming" of Land and Seas. KI TOV. And then the Divine command to the Land to spring forth with vegetation. 3 p'sukim with another KI TOV introduce us to the Plant Kingdom.

[P>1:14 (6)] Next, the account of Creation on the 4th day. The Sun, Moon and stars (and other "heavenly bodies") are placed in their positions and orbits. KI TOV.

[P>1:20 (4)] Next comes the Fifth Day, with its account of Animal Kingdom, part one. Swarming insects, fish, birds. KI TOV. And P'RU URVU.

[P>1:24 (8)] Next comes the largest parsha yet, with the formation of Animal Kingdom, part two. Land animals (most mammals). "Creepy things" probably includes most reptiles as well. One KI TOV.

Then comes the formation of human beings, first as a single being both male and female and then separated into two different beings, male and female (but with some "crossing" of characteristics). P'RU URVU **[1,A212 1:28]**. Which will combine them once again (in a sense). TOV ME'OD. THE sixth day. YOM HASHISHI.

[P>2:1 (3)] This relatively long first Aliya concludes with the

3-pasuk parsha introducing us to Shabbat B'reishit, the day that G-d blessed and sanctified because He "rested" from Creation. We say this parsha in the Friday night Amida, right after the Friday night Amida, and at the Friday night table as the first part of Kiddush. This should tell us how important it is that we learn well (as best as we can) the Torah's account of Creation.

Levi Second Aliya, 16 p'sukim - 2:4-19

[P>2:4 (37)] Now we have a restatement of Creation, focusing on Gan Eden, the formation of Adam, Adam's dominance over Nature, and his first prohibition - eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil.

"It is not good that man shall be alone" is explained in different ways, including that only G-d is singular. Man needs to know that as great as he can become, as much as he can accomplish, he is not a god.

All creatures were brought before Adam as "candidates" for partner-to-Adam. None was found suitable, but Adam named them all (as people have done throughout the ages).

Shlishi 3rd Aliya, 27 p'sukim, 2:20-3:21

The Torah's wording implies that Adam was first created as a combined male-female being, then (still on Day Six) he was physically separated as Adam and Chava, with the command and challenge of recombining spiritually, emotionally, and physically - "and they shall become one flesh".

Next the Torah tells us cryptically of

the episodes of the Serpent's enticement of Chava, the eating from the Tree, the punishments for the Serpent, Chava, and finally, Adam.

[S>3:16 (1)] This 1-pasuk parsha consists of G-d's "punishment" (call it "redefining") of Chava (woman-kind).

[S>3:17 (5)] And this parsha consists of Adam's "punishment" (same other possibility) and G-d's act of Chesed, in clothing the naked. This act is one of the many pointed to in our challenge to emulate the qualities of G-d.

R'VI' 4th Aliya, 21 p'sukim - 3:22-4:18

[p>3:22 (3)] This Aliya begins with the expulsion from Gan Eden, which is also seen as a metaphor for a re-definition of the role of humans in this world and of their (our) relationship with G-d.

[S>4:1 (26)] The Torah continues with the "births" of Kayin and Hevel and Kayin's killing of Hevel following the attempt of each to make an offering before G-d.

Sorry - that's it. No more room. Special thanks to E&Y for the tremendous job of printing and to the wonderful folders for their great work.