

Shemini Atzeret (Tishri 22)

Simchat Torah (Tishri 23)



After the week long celebration called “Sukkot” an extra day is added called the “Eighth Day of Assembly” or Shemini Atzeret. Imagine G-d is like a host, who invites us as visitors for a limited time, but when the time comes for us to leave, He has enjoyed himself so much that He asks us to stay another day. We therefore take an extra day to devote ourselves to spiritual concerns before we return to our daily routines. It is a day on which we recite the Yizkor, or remembrance service and remember those whom we have lost. It is a day that is a mixture of joy and sorrow and reminds us that life is a constant mixture of good and bad, joys and disappointments.

Simchat Torah means rejoicing with the Torah (Bible) and this holiday is accompanied by singing, dancing and celebration. Every year the Torah is read in its entirety and as we read the final section we immediately start to read it again, beginning with the first chapter of Genesis. The completion of the reading is a time of great celebration. There are processions around the synagogue carrying Torahs and as many people as possible are given the honour of carrying a Torah scroll in these processions.

At Shalom Village, on Shemini Atzeret residents will gather in the synagogue at 3:45 p.m. for a service of remembrance and on Simchat Torah the residents will celebrate during the day with processions and singing throughout the buildings carrying the Torahs.