

Rejoice with Trembling Simchat Torah, 5785, Kehillat Yedidya

To Yedidya members, Shalom u'Vracha,

We hope that this holiday season is going well for you - for those of you at home and for your loved ones who may be on the front. Thank God within the community we enjoyed Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur with uplifting davening and meaningful learning, and we began Sukkot as we left our houses for our impermanent homes. We pray that 5785 will bring blessings for all of us in many ways.

We are approaching *Shmini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*. This year the holiday will be marked in a bittersweet tone, as we both celebrate in the Torah, together with marking the first anniversary of the tragic events of last year, the results of which we are still in the midst of.

As we approached the challenge of designing this year's celebration of *Simchat Torah* we thought and planned deeply. We put out a call to the community to share their input on ideas and desires, and received various suggestions. Additionally we convened a specific committee which has been working for nearly two months. We deeply thank the committee members who devoted time and thought to this matter. At a later point we also included the *gabbaim* in the process.

As we worked we attempted to combine and balance between various desires and needs within the community:

- Between the desire to express joy in the Torah, maintain our traditions, feel the anchor of the familiar and known, and conserve the Simchat Torah customs of our community, as well as the recognition that last year's events must be present, to mark the humongous loss of life of that day as well as the past year and the ongoing trauma and mourning that we are experiencing as individuals, as a community and a nation. As well as the fact that we are not complete and cannot experience complete joy while so many of our brothers and sisters are still in captivity, thousands displaced from their homes, and all of us still at war.
- We attempted to balance between the various needs and desires of community members, by providing parallel options and choices, while also recognizing the deep need to come together, as a whole community, to give strength to each other and be comforted by each other and our togetherness.
- Additionally, we noted the needs of both the children and families as well as older members of the community and their families.

We invested much time and thought in order to incorporate various themes throughout the *chag*-elements of joy, mourning, grief, loss, memory, bravery, support, hope and prayer for all those who have not yet returned and all that still needs repair.

Please note that the current plan is for this year only. We are not making decisions for future years or for generations to come, but rather proposing what seems best for this current year.

While we have put together a thorough and clear plan, and while we recognize that knowledge and advance planning help give a sense of stability and the ability to make personal choices as to how to participate, it is also clear to us that we will need to be flexible. There may be last minute developments and surprises- either from a security or national perspective, or from an emotional or social perspective- that may cause us to re-evaluate or make last minute, on the spot changes. We ask for patience and the ability to be flexible and open to last minute changes.

It is clear to us that the current proposal will not be perfect for everyone, and will definitely not be right for every individual at every given moment. It is hard to anticipate what to expect, how we will feel and what our needs will be in real time. We ask the members of the community to come with a lot of compassion- towards ourselves and towards others. Sensitivity to the fact that everyone will be sensitive and hurting. We ask to make space for people to be present in the way that suits them, and to be aware of the needs of those around you, to support each other and to find strength in togetherness and our power as a community.

We want to thank the members of the community for their various ideas and suggestions of how to plan this complicated chag. Deep thanks to the members of the committee who dedicated much time and hard work to design the right format for this upcoming chag: Yinon Achiman, Leora Huberman, Pinchas Leiser, Nicky Lachs, Ariel Picard, Hadas Schroeder-Rahamim, Hannah Wacholder Katsman and Avigail Wiseglass.

With blessing for a chag Sameach, and prayers that as a nation we will merit a rebuilding of Israel and Jerusalem, and we will be able to dance and rejoice with the good news of the return of all our hostages, our soldiers and our displaced to their homes, in peace,

Elyssa Moss Rabinowitz and Aytan Kadden, Spiritual Leaders

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Eve of Simchat Torah

-Following Arvit, Elyssa Moss Rabinowitz will give a **short drasha**, explaining the reasoning and plan for the evening.

Hakafot:

This year, each one of the *hakafot* will be dedicated to a particular value. Each *hakafa* will include a brief introduction, a *pasuk* and biblical characters who provide inspiration for that value, and mention of the individuals we are honoring. Specific songs have been chosen for each *hakafa*. (This is not to say there is no room for a spontaneous song, but it is worthwhile to check with a *gabbai* before starting a song).

Hakafa 1- Silence

This will be a brief two minute, silent *hakafa*, as a statement that we are left with no words. We will identify with the grief of the loss of lives last year on Simchat Torah, and during the year since.

Hakafa 2: Pidyon Shvuim - Redeeming Captives

We will call out in prayer for the immediate return of our brothers and sisters who are still held in captivity in Gaza.

Hakafa 3: Gevurah- Bravery

In honor and deep appreciation of the bravery of all our soldiers (and over 100 in our community) in the army and in reserves, who have served so much time this year, in dedication and commitment to defending our country. We will also honor their families- parents, partners, children and grandparents, who have bravely persevered during this year on the homefront, supporting their soldiers while under tremendous stress. We also pray for the complete healing of our heroes who have been injured- a full recovery, in spirit and in body.

Hakafa 4: Chesed and Areivut: Acts of Kindness and Solidarity

Dedicated to those who have gone to great lengths to volunteer and support those in need during this past year- caring for the displaced, the soldiers on the front, volunteering in agriculture and caring for members of our local community and broader society.

Hakafa 5: Simcha- Joy

In honor of the *Chag* and the Torah, we will, despite it all, join together joyfully in song and dance, celebrate and be grateful for reaching this moment and for all the good in our lives.

Hakafa 6: Tikva- Hope

This is the traditional children and youth *hakafa*, at the end of which, we will distribute goodie bags. We will fill with hope and celebrate with our children, the future generation- parents, grandparents and children.

Hakafa 7: Shalom- Peace

We will remind ourselves that even in the depths of war, we raise our hopes and prayers for the time when we will live in peace and quiet with our neighbors, seeking life and peace.

Following the first two hakafot and parallel to the remaining ones, there will be an **option of two mini Torah Shiurim**, in the entry level, taught by Pinchas Leiser and Jocelyn Weiss.

Conclusion of Arvit together as a Kehilla.

Simchat Torah Morning

There will be two *minyanim*, as we have every year: Early Hashkama Minyan (6:20) and Regular Main Minyan (8:30).

In the **Hashkama minyan** the *hakafot* will be shorter (as always, but will still follow the same format dedicated to values), and will include both a men's and women's reading and special *yizkor* as will be explained below.

Regular Minyan:

-*Tefilla* will be conducted as usual through *Hallel*.

-Approx 9:30 - **Hakafot**: Following the same format and values as listed in the evening, albeit shorter.

-**Parallel to the morning Hakafot** there will be an option of **Small Discussion and Sharing Groups** for people looking to talk about thoughts and feelings on this day, in a safe and supported setting. Facilitated by Dani Kahn and other community members from the support professions.

-During Hotza'at Sefer Torah, we will sing our version of "**Eli Eli**" dedicated to the hostages, as we have done during all of the Tishrei holidays.

-Approx 10:30 - As usual, there will be a **Main Torah reading for men and one for women** (with *hattaniml kallot*) and *haftara*.

This year we have chosen to honor people who have dedicated much time and effort both to the Yedidya community as well as to our nation and country as a whole:

Hatan Torah: Michael Stahl, who has finished many years of dedicated work as a Gabai in the community.

Hatan Breishit: Yoni Moss, who has worked tirelessly this entire year on behalf of the hostages and has organized our community to become more active and engaged on this issue.

Kallat Torah: Hadas Schroeder Rahamim, who has finished two years of serving with much dedication and devotion as co-Yoshevet Rosh of the Kehilla, within the challenges of supporting the community during a war.

Kallat Breishit: Randi Garber, who has led Yedidya's support of the Shlomi displaced community in Jerusalem over the entire past year and continues to do so with patience and dedication.

-Approx 11:15- Following the separate readings we will join together upstairs for one round of a **Children's Torah Reading**, where five children (pre bar/bat mitzvah) will read *aliyot* of *v'zot habracha*, as a way to give a central place to the children of the community and as a sign of hope and faith for us all, in the next generation. The **Kol HaNaarim** young children's aliya will take place here (and not, as in the past, in the separate men/ women's readings).

-Approx 11:40:

-Five *Tefillot* for the sick, soldiers, hostages, peace and state

-**Yizkor**: We will open *yizkor* with the public prayers:

Regular *El Male Rachamim* (Holocaust, soldiers, Yitzchak Rabin)

We will add ***yizkor* for those who were murdered on Simchat Torah 5754**. Prior to the prayer each person will receive a page with roughly ten names of those murdered. During this *Tefilla* the leader will pause allowing **everyone to read their names silently**. We have chosen to include both those murdered on Simchat Torah, as well as those citizens, soldiers and hostages killed since then.

-We will sing "*Kinat Be'eri*" written by Yagel Harush, to the tune of *Tikkun HaGeshelem*

-After this people will say their own private *yizkor*.

-Tefillat HaGeshelem, followed by Musaf, as usual.

-Approx 12:45 - As every year, there will be tables for **mass aliyot and Children's Reading**:

- Two for men (please make certain there is a *minyan* at all times at the table)
- Three for women (please make sure there are ten women at all times for this reading)
- One mixed (please make certain there is a *minyan* of men at all times at this table)
- Children's reading in Mercaz Dov.

1:30, after the mass aliyot, **Mincha Gedola**

Kiddush:

There will be a kiddush for the children in Merkaz Dov, as part of the children's reading.

For the rest of the community: We know it is a long morning and people will be hungry. With that said, it feels inappropriate to have a festive Kiddush.

Therefore, the Kiddush will take place in the following format:

- It will take place outside, in the garden (not on the front patio as usual)
- The community will provide grape juice and wine

- People are invited to bring their own simple food and make Kiddush and share it with others who are in the garden. We ask that people do not bring hard drinks.
- The Toranim will be asked to only help with clearing the patio and returning the tables.

Seats:

There was a suggestion that people do not sit in their usual spots in shul on Simchat Torah. Similar to mourners who change their seats during their year of mourning, as well as a way to show discomfort and instability as long as the hostages have not returned. If this suggestion resonates for you, you are invited to sit in a different spot during this *chag*.

Simchat Torah Afternoon

5:40 Mincha Ketana

Followed by a shiur taught by **Meesh Hammer-Kossoy: Which man has planted a vineyard? (Deut. 20): Balancing Personal and National Needs During Extended Wartime** (in Hebrew)

6:30 Arvit