

Shmini Atzaret - The 8th Day of Remaining What Sort of Holiday is This?

Source Sheet by Laurence Rosenthal

Leviticus 23:36

(36) Seven days you shall bring offerings by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day, you shall observe a sacred occasion and bring an offering by fire to the LORD; it is a solemn gathering: you shall not work at your occupations.

ויקרא כ"ג:ל"ו

(לו) שבעת ימים תקריבו אשה ליקוק ביום השמיני מקרא-קדש יהיה לכם והקרבתם אשה ליקוק עצרת הוא פל-מלאכת עבודה לא תעשו:

Deuteronomy 16:13-15

(13) After the ingathering from your threshing floor and your vat, you shall hold the Feast of Booths for seven days. (14) You shall rejoice in your festival, with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the [family of the] Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your communities. (15) You shall hold a festival for your God יהוה seven days, in the place that יהוה will choose; for your God יהוה will bless all your crops and all your undertakings, and you shall have nothing but joy.

דברים ט"ז:י"ג-ט"ו

(יג) חג הסופת תעשה לה שבעת ימים באספה מגרנה ומיקבה: (יד) ושמחת בחגך אתה ובנך ובתך ועבדך ופארתך ושלוי והגר והיתום והאלמנה אשר בשעריך: (טו) שבעת ימים תחג ליהוה אלהיך במקום אשר יבחר יהוה כי יברכך יהוה אלהיך בכל תבואתך ובכל מעשה ידיך והיית אף שמח:

Rashi on Leviticus 23:36:1

(1) עצרת הוא — The word is derived from the root עצר “to hold back” and suggests: I keep you back with Me one day more. It is similar to the case of a king who invited his children to a banquet for a certain number of days. When the time arrived for them to take their departure he said, “Children, I beg of you, stay one day more with me; it is so hard for me to part with you!” (cf. Rashi on Numbers 29:36 and Sukkah 55b).

Numbers 29:35

(35) On the eighth day you shall hold a solemn gathering you shall not work at your occupations.

רש"י על ויקרא כ"ג:ל"ו:א

(א) עצרת הוא. עצרתי אתכם אצלי; כמלה שזמן את בניו לסעודה לכה וכך ימים, פיון שהגיע זמן לפטר, אמר, בני בבקשה מכם עכבו עמי עוד יום אחד, קשה עלי פרוצתכם:

במדבר כ"ט:ל"ה

(לה) ביום השמיני עצרת תהיה לכם פל-מלאכת עבודה לא תעשו:

Bamidbar Rabbah 21:24

(24) 24 (Numb. 29:35) “On the eighth day you shall have a solemn assembly”: This text is related (to Is. 26:16), “You have added to the nation O Lord.” The Community of Israel said in front of the Holy One, blessed be He, “Master of the world, You added [years of] tranquility to the generation of the flood, did they maybe ever offer a single bull or a single ram? It is not enough that they did not offer, but they [even] said (in Gen. 11:4), ‘Let us build for ourselves a city.’ And so too with the Sodomites, and so too with Pharaoh, and so too with Sennacherib and so too with Nebuchadnezzar. Did they maybe ever offer a single bull or

במדבר רבה כ"א:כ"ד

(כד) ביום השמיני עצרת, זה שאמר הכתוב (תהלים קט, ד): תחת אהבתי ישטנוני ואני תפלה, את מוצא בחרג ישראל מקריבין לפניך שבעים פרים על שבעים אמות, אמרו ישראל רבון העולמים הרי אנו מקריבין עליהם שבעים פרים והיו צריכין לאהב אותנו

a single ram? It is not enough that they did not offer [anything] in front of You, but they even angered You. And to whom is it fitting for You to add tranquility and glory? To Israel, as stated (in Is. 26:16), ‘You have added to the nation.’” And a nation is only referring to Israel, as stated (in II Sam. 7:23), “And who is like Your people Israel, a unique nation on earth.” The community of Israel said in front of the Holy One, blessed be He, “Master of the world, You should add festivals for us, and we shall offer sacrifices in front of You as is fitting.” (Is. 26:16, cont.) “You have been honored,” “You have given us new moons, and we sacrifice in front of You [then], as is stated (in Numb. 28:11), ‘And on new moons.’ You have given us Passover, we have sacrificed to You; You have given us Pentecost, we have sacrificed to You; You have given us the New Year, we have sacrificed to You; You have given us the Day of Atonement, we have sacrificed to You. And so too on the festival [of Tabernacles]. We have not ignored [the sacrifices for] even one festival.” The Community of Israel said, “You should add festivals for us, and we shall offer sacrifices in front of You and honor You.” (Is. 26:16, cont.) “You have added to the nation and been honored [...]” The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel, “By your lives, I will not take away holidays [from you], but I will add festivals for you to rejoice in them, as stated (in Numb. 29:35), ‘On the eighth day you shall have a solemn assembly.’”

והם שונאין אותנו, שְׁנֵאָמַר: תַּחַת אֶהְבְּתִי יִשְׁטַנּוּנִי. לְפִיכֹף אָמַר לָהֶם הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עֲכָשׁוּ הַקְּרִיבוּ עַל עֲצֻמְכֶם, בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי עֲצַרְתָּ תַּהְיֶה לָכֶם. (במדבר כט, לו): וְהַקְּרַבְתֶּם עֲלֵהּ אִשָּׁה רֵיחַ גִּיחַח לִיקוּק פֶּר אֶחָד אֵיל אֶחָד, מִשָּׁל לְמִלֶּךְ נִשְׁעָשָׂה סְעוּדָה נִשְׁבַּעַת יָמִים, וְזָמַן כָּל בְּנֵי אָדָם שֶׁבַּמְדִּינָה בְּשִׁבְעַת יָמֵי הַמְּשֻׁתָּה, כִּיּוֹן נִשְׁעָבְרוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמֵי הַמְּשֻׁתָּה, אָמַר לְאוֹהֲבוּ כְּבָר יִצְאָנוּ יָדִינוּ מִכָּל בְּנֵי הַמְּדִינָה, נִגְלָגַל אָנִי וְאַתָּה בַּמָּה שֶׁתִּמְצָא, לְטָרָא בְּשָׂר אוֹ שֵׁל דָּג אוֹ יֶרֶק. כֹּף אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל: בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי עֲצַרְתָּ תַּהְיֶה לָכֶם, גִּלְגָּלוּ בַּמָּה שֶׁאַתֶּם מוֹצְאִים, בְּפֶר אֶחָד וְאֵיל אֶחָד.

Nehemiah 8:8-18

(8) They read from the scroll of the Teaching of God, translating it and giving the sense; so they understood the reading. (9) Nehemiah the Tirshatha, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were explaining to the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the LORD your God: you must not mourn or weep,” for all the people were weeping as they listened to the words of the Teaching. (10) He further said to them, “Go, eat choice foods and drink sweet drinks and send portions to whoever has nothing prepared, for the day is holy to our Lord. Do not be sad, for your rejoicing in the LORD is the source of your strength.” (11) The Levites were quieting the people, saying, “Hush, for the day is holy; do not be sad.” (12) Then all the people went to eat and drink and send portions and make great merriment, for they understood the things they were told. (13) On the second day, the heads of the clans of all the people and the priests and Levites gathered to Ezra the scribe to study the words of the Teaching. (14) They found written in the Teaching that the LORD had commanded Moses that the Israelites must dwell in booths during the festival of the seventh month, (15) and that they must announce and proclaim throughout all their towns and

נחמיה ח:ח-י"ח

(ח) וַיִּקְרְאוּ בַסֵּפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים מִפְּרֹשׁ וְשׁוּם שְׁכָל וַיְבִינּוּ בַמִּקְרָא: {ט} וַיֹּאמֶר נַחֲמִיָּה הוּא הַתִּרְשָׁתָא וְעִזְרָא הַכֹּהֵן | הַסֵּפֶר וְהַלּוּיִם הַמְבַיְנִים אֶת־הַעֵם לְכָל־הָעֵם הַיּוֹם קִדְש־הוּא לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אַל־תִּתְאָבְלוּ וְאַל־תִּבְכּוּ כִּי בּוֹכִים כָּל־הָעֵם כְּשִׁמְעֵם אֶת־דְּבַר הַתּוֹרָה: {י} וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם לְכוּ אֲכֹלוּ מִשְׂמְנִים וּשְׂתוּ מִמִּתְקִים וּשְׁלְחוּ מְנוֹת לְאִין נָכוֹן לוֹ כִּי־קְדוֹשׁ הַיּוֹם לְאֲדַגְנוּ וְאַל־תִּעֲצְבוּ כִּי־סָדַנְתָּ יְהוָה הִיא מְעֻזְכֶם: {יא} וְהַלּוּיִם מַחֲשִׁים לְכָל־הָעֵם לֵאמֹר הִסּוּ כִּי הַיּוֹם קִדְשׁ וְאַל־תִּעֲצְבוּ: {יב} וַיֵּלְכוּ כָל־הָעֵם לֵאכֹל וּלְשַׂתּוֹת וּלְשַׁלַּח מְנוֹת וּלְעֲשׂוֹת שְׂמִחָה גְדוֹלָה כִּי הִבִּינוּ בַּדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הוֹדִיעָנוּ לָהֶם: {פ} (יג) וּבַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי נֶאֱסַפוּ רֵאשֵׁי הָאֲבוֹת לְכָל־הָעֵם הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלּוּיִם אֶל־עִזְרָא הַסֵּפֶר וּלְהַשְׁכִּיל אֶל־דְּבַר הַתּוֹרָה: {יד} וַיִּמְצְאוּ כְּתוּב בְּתוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר יֵשְׁבוּ בְּגִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּסֻּפּוֹת בְּחָג בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי: {טו} וְאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּ

Jerusalem as follows, "Go out to the mountains and bring leafy branches of olive trees, pinea trees, myrtles, palms and [other] leafy-a trees to make booths, as it is written." (16) So the people went out and brought them, and made themselves booths on their roofs, in their courtyards, in the courtyards of the House of God, in the square of the Water Gate and in the square of the Ephraim Gate. (17) The whole community that returned from the captivity made booths and dwelt in the booths—the Israelites had not done so from the days of Joshua son of Nun to that day—and there was very great rejoicing. (18) He read from the scroll of the Teaching of God each day, from the first to the last day. They celebrated the festival seven days, and there was a solemn gathering on the eighth, as prescribed.

וַיַּעֲבִירוּ קוֹל בְּכָל-עֲרֵיָהֶם וּבִירוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר צֹאן
הָהָר וְהָבִיאוּ עָלֵינוּ זֵית וְעַל־יַעַץ שֶׁמֶן וְעַל־הַדָּס
וְעַל־תְּמָרִים וְעַל־יַעַץ עֵבֶת לַעֲשׂוֹת סֹכֹת כַּכְּתוּב:
{טז} וַיָּצְאוּ הָעָם וַיָּבִיאוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם
סֹכֹת אִישׁ עַל-גֹּגֹו וּבְחֻצְרֹתֵיהֶם וּבְחֻצְרוֹת בַּיִת
הָאֱלֹהִים וּבְרַחֲוֹב יַעֲרַר הַמַּיִם וּבְרַחֲוֹב יַעֲרַר
אֲפָרַיִם: {יז} וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָל-הַקְּהָל הַשְּׂבִיִּים
מִן-הַשָּׁבִי אֶסְכוֹת וַיִּשְׁבּוּ בַסֹּכֹת כִּי לֹא-עָשׂוּ מִימֵי
יְשׁוּעַ בֶּן-נּוּן כֹּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד הַיּוֹם הַהוּא וַתְּהִי
שִׂמְחָה גְדוֹלָה מְאֹד: {יח} וַיִּקְרָא בְּסֵפֶר תּוֹרַת
הָאֱלֹהִים יוֹם אֶחָד מִן-הַיּוֹם הַרְּאִשׁוֹן עַד הַיּוֹם
הַחֲמִישִׁי וַיַּעֲשׂוּ-חֶג לְשִׁבְעַת יָמִים וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי
עֲצָרַת כַּמִּשְׁפָּט: {פ}

Ma'amarey Admor Ha-Zaken

(35) On the eighth day you shall hold a solemn gathering

...Why do we begin to recite "the One who makes the wind blow and the rain fall" on *Shmini Atzaret*?...Dew represents love, and rain represents awe/fear. Both are crucial, since with love alone your personal existence would be totally annihilated, [for love would reabsorb you back into the divine self]. Fear is necessary because it represents drawing back. Love and fear together are called the two wings [by which prayer flies upward].

...Therefore we mention rain in the blessing that describes God's power (*gevurot*, associated with 'fear'). Rainfall is actually an expression of divine restraint since it descends drop by drop [rather than all at once]. On the eighth day of *Shmini Atzaret*, [God's] love is revealed without any limits, and therefore we must mention the rain in order to hold it back (*la-atzor*/'*Atzaret*). This allows the world to maintain its existence...

Rabbi Sampson Raphael Hirsch - Commentary on Number 29:35

וַיַּעֲצֵר - On the 8th day of Remaining - not "AND on the day," as it says in the cases of all the preceding days, for the eighth day is a festival in its own right.

On the eighth day, the sounds of the public rejoicing over the sukkot festival cease. No longer do we contemplate in a state of rapture the distant future of all mankind's salvation. Rather, we quietly assemble before God before we return to the reality of the still unrefined, imperfect present. Only then can we return to the service of God of everyday life, for our consciousness has been enriched and elevated by the whole cycle of the festivals, and the spirit that inspired us when we were before God will not depart from us in all the trials that we are likely to face.

On this eighth day, we renew, at the parting greeting in God's sanctuary, the consciousness that all of us together belong to God and are bound in our destinies and endeavors to God's Torah. As one community we shall work in the fields of the future of humanity; as one community we shall be guides leading the flock of nations; and God's guidance will be revealed through our destiny, for we are God's covenantal people.

Source Sheet created on Sefaria by Laurence Rosenthal