



**MRS. SARA ZIMBALIST**

MOTHER OF FALLEN SOLDIER, SERGEANT ELI MOSHE ZIMBALIST HY"D

**SHMINI ATZERET / SIMCHAT TORAH**

# Connecting to Hashem Through Song

The holiday of Simchat Torah has arrived and it is time to stop and reflect. We have just had a very busy Elul and Tishrei, saying Selichot, lots of davening, thinking about and asking Hashem for Teshuva, and the more mundane but yet important tasks of preparing and eating meals pre-fast and post-fast and Yom Tov ones, purchasing Daled Minim, building a Succah, and planning Chol Hamoed get togethers and day trips with the family.

We finally get to the last Yom Tov of Simchat Torah and how does one feel? The answer I am thinking of is B"H we have another Yom Tov, another way and time to connect to Hashem. Yes we have just had many days of Yom Tov, but this chag of

Simchat Torah is a different kind of chag. It is a chag of endings and also of beginnings.

We finish reading the last parsha in the Torah, V'zot Habracha and say חזק ונתחזק but we also begin reading the Torah again with Parshat Bereishit. Simchat Torah teaches us a special *yesod* of Judaism. We never stop, we never give up. Something may be finished but there is a tomorrow and we start again and keep going. This is the Torah way of life. Every aspect of our lives can be learned from something in the Torah, that is the special way Hashem created it for us. It is a guide book to help us figure out how to do the right things, and this holiday that we get to celebrate now, the last of the season, teaches us this important point.



October 8th, 2023, Eli Moshe HY"D and his fellow soldiers dancing hakafot shniyot with a Torah on his army base.



We can draw the strength to celebrate Simchat Torah even when this day, just 2 years ago, has forever been changed for Am Yisrael. We will never forget what happened and our hearts are with those who have suffered the loss of family members and friends, and we fervently daven for the hostages taken that very day, to be released right away and to stay strong. We daven for the safety of our soldiers who are fighting against evil. It may not always feel right to be singing and dancing when so many are unable to; like the hostages, the soldiers on the front lines, and the injured, but I feel that the Torah and specifically this Yom Tov teaches us that we have to and it shows us how.

We keep going with our heads held high, as hard and as challenging as that may be. We do it for ourselves and for the future generations. Resilience is one of our greatest weapons, along with *achdut*, unity. When we dance with the Torah together, we are all united. We always need to be united. That doesn't mean everyone needs to agree but we all need to tolerate, respect, love and appreciate one another.

On Simchat Torah, we spend a lot of the night and day davening in shul, but a lot of the time is singing and dancing with the Torah. This year when you are singing, I want you to really think about what kinds of songs we are singing. Listen to the words, think about the kinds of songs we sing, and the themes of the songs we sing. Singing these songs connect us to Hashem. We sing about the Torah, the Beit Hamikdash, Moshe Rabbeinu, Hashem protecting us and watching over us, not feeling fear, doing mitzvot with happiness and the list goes on and on. Not all tefillot are through words that we read and

say in our Siddur or Machzor, rather on this special holiday we can connect and daven to Hashem through song. Hashem wants that connection with us.

Everyone, men, women and children when you dance and sing this year, do it with joy and happiness and concentrate on each word in order to allow you to get closer and connect with Hashem. May we focus on that connection especially when we get to the last song of the Hakafot, sing it like a tefillah, with so much kavana and a fervent hope for the coming of Moshiach.

■ לשנה הבאה בירושלים הבנויה, אמן.

**Sara Zimbalist** made Aliyah with her family 20 years ago to Bet Shemesh. She volunteers as an EMT in Ichud Hatzala. She is the mother of fallen soldier, Sergeant Eli Moshe Zimbalist HY"D who was killed in Rafiach on June 15, 2024 at the age of 21.

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