

HaMizrachi Family Page

What is Shemini Atzeret?

The holiday of Shemini Atzeret appears twice in the Torah: Vayikra 23:39 and Bamidbar 29:35. The Torah does not say much about it though. It does not directly give the date of the holiday. Instead, it sets the date of the holiday as "the eighth day" (Yom haShemini), meaning the eighth day of Sukkot. It describes the holiday as atzeret, a holiday of assembly, conclusion or stopping. It states that work is not permitted on this day. It lists sacrifices to be brought to the Temple in Jerusalem on the holiday.

While Shemini Atzeret is a separate holiday (e.g. in our prayers, it is described as Shemini Atzeret, not Sukkot and ritual objects used during the seven days of Sukkot, including the sukkah, the lulav and the etrog, are not used on Shemini Atzeret), it is still included in the season called Z'man Simchateinu, the time of our joy. Starting on Shemini Atzeret (so that we can sit in a dry sukkah throughout Sukkot), we begin adding the request for rain - from the One who reigns - into our Amidah prayers: מְנַשֵּׁב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם - "He causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall."

Here are some rainy jokes to get your family into the smiling spirit:

What is a king's favorite kind of precipitation? Hail!

When does it rain money? When there is "change" in the weather.

What's the difference between a horse and the weather? One's reined up, the other rains down.

What do you call it when it rains chickens and ducks? Foul (fowl) weather.

What did one raindrop say to the other? Two's company, three's a cloud

What does it do before it rains candy? It sprinkles!

What do you call a wet bear? A drizzly bear

What often falls but never gets hurt? Rain

