

THE HOLIDAY EDITION
For Grades 6-7



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CANDLE LIGHTING

The Torah is more than a set of stories and laws. It is our way of looking at life, and shows us how to live – and treat each other – in a meaningful way.

So, to keep a connection to the Torah's messages, we study a different portion each week, completing the entire Torah over the course of a year. Simchat Torah is the day that we end – and begin anew – our yearly cycle.

Simchat Torah means "Rejoicing with the Torah." It is a festive holiday, during which we sing, dance and rejoice; we're feeling the joy at having a special way of thinking to help us through life.

Simchat Torah celebrations are a time to dance with the Torah and appreciate our ability to lead meaningful, beautiful lives. It's interesting that we dance with closed Torah scrolls. It's not a day to spend on reading the Torah as much as celebrating the Torah. One reason is that, when it comes to reading, we each relate to the Torah in different ways. On Simchat Torah, our ability to read and understand is not the central point; our celebration is about our connection to the Torah. We each have that connection, no matter how much Torah we can read or understand. It's G-d's gift to us all.

And THAT'S reason to celebrate!

THE DIALOGUE

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR THE CHABAD HEBREW SCHOOL COMMUNITY

IT'S SIMCHAT TORAH!

By: Malkie Herson & Dena Torgeman



he shoes sat piled neatly in the front closet. Together, the **Baseball Cleats** and the **Soccer Sneakers** clambered about, eagerly discussing their successes.



"What a rush!" the **Baseball Cleats** gleamed. "The other night, when our team hit that walk off home run – whoa! What a feeling!" You could feel the thrill in the cleat's voice. "Then, we huddled as a team and lifted our coach around the diamond! He the best! He trained our team to win!"

"Yea! I know what you mean!" the **Soccer Sneakers** said, enthusiastically. "Last week, we won a game against the #1 team in the league. The score was three-nothing! Our team captain gave us such awesome support, so at the very end, we all lifted him up, singing songs of victory and dancing around the field!"



The fancy, **Party Shoes** sat quietly on the side, listening in. Although they weren't ones to brag, they just couldn't contain their excitement any longer.



"We know what you mean! We know what you mean! Today we'll have the same thing!" they burst out.



The other shoes quickly turned in their direction.

"Huh?" said the **Ballet Slippers**.

"Whatcha talking about?" asked the **Hiking Boots**.

"No offense, but you don't see much action, at least not compared to us sportswear," said the **Cleats**. "Where are you goin' and who are you cheerin'?"

"You're not on a team. You're fancy holiday shoes, reserved for special occasions," the **School Shoes** analyzed.

The fancy **Party Shoes** smiled with pride. "Sure, we don't play sports, but today we'll be in the midst of some real action!" The other shoes stared at them in disbelief. "Where are you going?" they asked, their voices as one.

"To the Chabad Jewish Center," the **Party Shoes** answered.

"Why? There's no Hebrew School today. Besides," says the **School Shoes**, "if there was, I'd be the one going."

"Yup, you're right. Today is not school day. Today, the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah is in full swing as Jews gather together to sing and dance with the Torah. They congregate today to celebrate this joyous occasion with exciting festivities. And we will be right there celebrating!" said the **Party Shoes** getting even more excited.

"Yeah, I remember this from last year... Simchat Torah is the culminating event of a string of Jewish holidays that take place in the month of Tishrei," said the ever-philosophizing **Penny Loafers**. "Starting off with Rosh Hashana, when we set the tone for the new year and thought about all the great things that are to come. Then came Yom Kippur when we reflected on the past, but we also looked forward to the future, knowing that we can move forward. On Sukkot we are reminded of and celebrate the never-ending support Hashem gives us. With that true and genuine love from Hashem, we are sure to succeed! What a process we've gone through! What a journey we've had! All of this information is from the Torah, so in our excitement, we dance with it. It's truly an overwhelming experience when you think about it!"

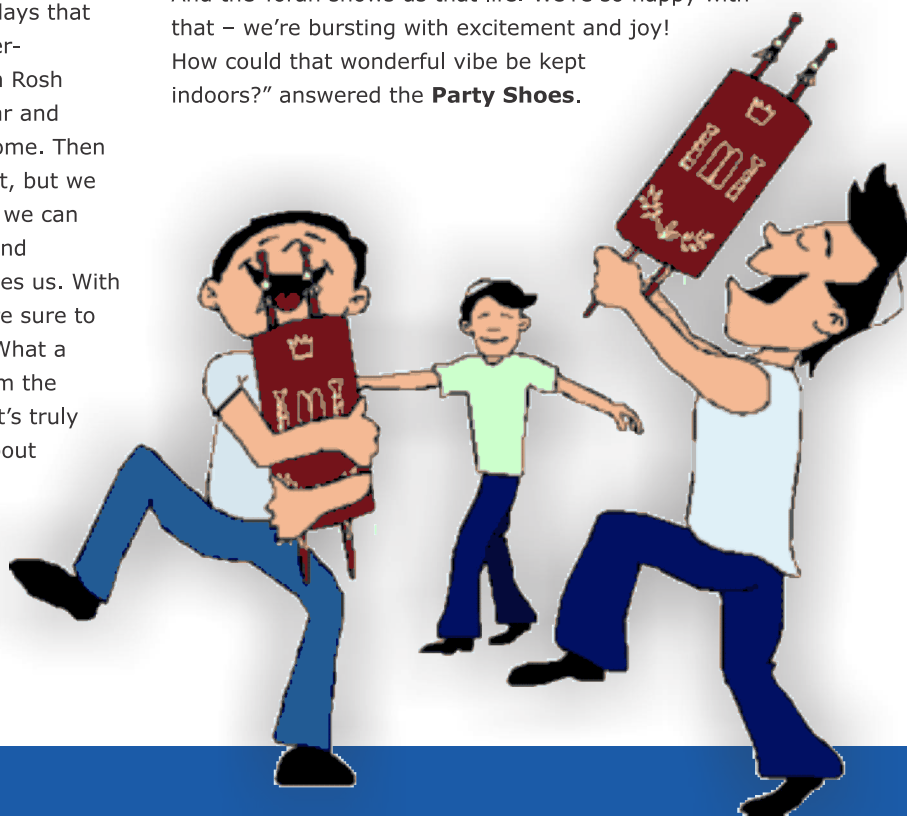
"Today we celebrate the Torah for being our guide, kind of like a team captain! The Torah teaches us and guides us, and shows

us the way to being our best selves. Just as you lifted your coach in appreciation," said the **Party Shoes** to the **Cleats**, "we'll lift ours... We hold the Torah tight and we dance and dance. The joy is incredible!"

The **Party Shoes** continued, "It starts indoors as people dance with the Torah, eat yummy foods and candies, and then the festivities end up making rounds outside in the front lawn. You should see those rabbis go! Loads of fun! It's wild!"

"But why the *outside* dancing?" asked the **Sneakers**, feeling a bit left out.

"Simchat Torah is about feeling and expressing our joy, our happiness that Hashem gives us the opportunity to LIVE A LIFE THAT MATTERS. Sure, we should have fun in life, but we can do even *more*: we can lead a life that is meaningful. And the Torah shows us that life. We're so happy with that – we're bursting with excitement and joy! How could that wonderful vibe be kept indoors?" answered the **Party Shoes**.



THE DIALOGUE

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- ◆ "Live a life that matters, a life that is meaningful." What does that mean to you?
- ◆ What fills you with happiness?
- ◆ Have you ever done something for someone else (or for G-d) which you consider meaningful? How did it make you feel? How did that feeling compare to the feeling of having done something fun for yourself?
- ◆ What does Simchat Torah mean to you?