

Torah Portion for Simchat Torah

Shabbat beginning October 17, 2022

As Simchat Torah is the favorite holiday of many Torah lovers, there are myriads of beautiful commentaries on it. Some synagogues celebrate all night, taking their Torahs out to read the last chapters of D'varim at night and the first chapters of B'reishit in the morning. The Torah's last letter "lamed" and its first "beth" spell the Hebrew word for heart. We love everything in between. Some congregations parade their scrolls around the synagogue with dance and song. Some unwind its whole 30-50 yards just to wind it up on its opposite etz chaim (roller). Since no culture celebrates a book like we do—they call us "the people of the book."

As Rabbi Max Chaiken wrote "By turning it again and again, we gain new wisdom from our Torah. We discover new ways to think about our lives, our choices, our history, and our future. As we grow from our childhood to old age, Torah always offers us an opportunity for reflection." Torah helps us cultivate our Jewish identities. While young, we try to make others interpret like we do. Later we use it to try to help others. Ultimately, the Torah helps us change ourselves and our communities.