



## לשמחת תורה

### הקפות

The following פסוקים are chanted by one or a series of individuals; each פסוק is then repeated by the congregation.

אַתָּה הִרְאֵתָ לְדַעַת, כִּי יְהוּה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים,  
אֵין עוֹד מִלְּבָדוֹ.  
לְעֵשֶׂה נִפְלְאוֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת לְבָדוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ.  
אֵין כְּמוֹךָ בְּאֱלֹהִים, אֲדָנִי, וְאֵין כְּמַעֲשֵׂיךָ.  
יְהִי כְבוֹד יְהוּה לְעוֹלָם, יִשְׁמַח יְהוּה בְּמַעֲשָׂיו.  
יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוּה מְבָרָךְ, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.  
יְהִי יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַמְּנוּ, כְּאֲשֶׁר הָיָה עִם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,  
אֵל יַעֲזֹבֵנוּ וְאֵל יִשְׁשָׁנוּ.  
וְאָמְרוּ, הוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
וְקַבְּצֵנוּ וְהַצִּילֵנוּ מִן הַגּוֹיִם,  
לְהוֹדוֹת לְשֵׁם קְדוֹשְׁךָ, לְהַשְׁתַּבֵּחַ בְּתוֹהֲלֹתֶיךָ.  
יְהוּה מְלֶךְ, יְהוּה מְלֶךְ, יְהוּה יְמִלֶךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.  
יְהוּה עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן, יְהוּה יְבַרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם.  
וַיְהִי נָא אֲמַרְיֵנוּ לְרַצּוֹן, לְפָנֵי אֲדוֹן כָּל.

The ארון הקודש is opened.

וַיְהִי בְנִסְעֵ הָאָרוֹן, וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה:  
קוּמָה יְהוּה, וַיִּפְצוּ אֵיבֵיךָ, וַיִּנְסוּ מִשְׁנֵאֵיךָ מִפְּנֵיךָ.  
קוּמָה יְהוּה לְמְנוּחֹתֶיךָ, אַתָּה וְאָרוֹן עֲנֶךָ.  
בְּהִנְיֶיךָ יִלְבְּשׁוּ צִדְקָה, וַיְחַסִּידֶיךָ יִרְנָנוּ.  
בְּעִבּוֹר דָּוָד עֲבָדְךָ, אֵל תָּשָׁב פָּנֵי מִשִּׁיחֶךָ.

## Simḥat Torah

## שמחת תורה

The last day of the fall holiday season is celebrated as Simḥat Torah — Rejoicing in the Torah. In the Diaspora, this is the second day of Sh'mini Atzeret. In Israel, Simḥat Torah and Sh'mini Atzeret are celebrated on the same day. The celebration is based upon the fact that on this day we complete the yearly cycle of the Torah reading and begin the cycle again. The celebrations and customs of Simḥat Torah developed gradually through the centuries. The midrash (Song of Songs Rabbah 1:9) mentions the custom of making a celebratory banquet when finishing the reading of the Torah based upon the verse: "He [Solomon] went to Jerusalem, stood before the Ark of the Covenant of Adonai, and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented offerings of well-being; and he made a banquet for all his courtiers" (I Kings 3:15). By the time of the Geonim in Babylonia, Simḥat Torah was celebrated with rejoicing in synagogues, although the name Simḥat Torah is not yet mentioned. The complete reading of the Torah in Babylonia was accomplished during the course of one year. In the Land of Israel, however, it took three years. Therefore Simḥat Torah was not celebrated there on this specific date each year until much later, when the custom changed and the Torah was read in one year there as well. Sh'mini Atzeret has no specific concepts or events attached to it. Therefore, making it the celebration of the Torah reading gave important meaning to the day. Hakafot, processions, were a late custom originating in Safed in the sixteenth century. Obviously this custom was influenced by the processions held each day of Sukkot with the chanting of Hoshanot.

**אתה הראת לדעת** — **You have been clearly shown.** Deuteronomy 4:35. Moses reminds Israel of the events at Mount Sinai when they experienced the Presence of God and heard God's voice.

**לעשה נפלאות גדולות** — **who works great wonders.** Psalm 136:4. A psalm of thanksgiving praising God "whose love is forever."

**אין כמותך** — **None compare to You.** Psalm 86:8. An assertion of God's uniqueness.

**יהי כבוד יהוה** — **The glory of Adonai.** Psalm 104:31, describing the glory of nature, the world, and all that is in it. All of this bespeaks the glory of God. The first of three verses beginning with the word יהי (*y'hi*), "may."

**יהי שם יהוה** — **May the name of Adonai.** Psalm 113:2. Another of the verses intended to heap praise upon God.

**יהי יהוה אֱלֹהֵינו עִמָּנוּ** — **May Adonai our God be with us.** I Kings 8:57. The words of Solomon at the conclusion of the dedication of the Temple. As we approach the opening of the synagogue Ark containing the Torah scrolls, both this verse and the next remind us of the ancient Ark containing the tablets inscribed with the words of God.

**וְאָמְרוּ, הוֹשִׁיעֵנו** — **Cry out: Deliver us.** I Chronicles 16:35. The conclusion of a psalm recited when David brought the Ark into the tent in Jerusalem.

**יהוה מֶלֶךְ** — **Adonai reigns.** Not a verse, but phrases taken from several verses (Psalm 10:16, 93:1; Exodus 15:18) expressing God's eternal sovereignty.

**יהוה עוֹ לְעִמּוֹ יִתֵּן** — **May Adonai grant His people strength.** Psalm 29:11. The Sages interpreted the word "strength" to mean Torah. Thus: "May Adonai give His people the Torah."

**וְיִדְהוּ נָא אֲמַרְיֵנוּ** — **May our words.** A line incorporating words from Psalms 19:15 and 97:5, speaking of the perfection of God's teaching.

## FOR SIMḤAT TORAH

### HAKAFOT

*The following biblical verses are chanted by one or a series of individuals; each verse is then repeated by the congregation.*

**You have been clearly shown** that Adonai alone is God; there is none besides God.

Give thanks to Adonai **who works great wonders** alone; God's love is forever.

**None compare to You, Adonai,** and nothing compares to Your creation.

The glory of Adonai endures forever; may God rejoice in His works.

**May the name of Adonai** be praised, now and forever.

**May Adonai our God be with us** as He was with our ancestors; may God not abandon or forsake us.

**Cry out: Deliver us, God our deliverer!** Gather us and save us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to Your holy name, that we may take pride in Your praise.

**Adonai reigns, Adonai has reigned,** Adonai shall reign throughout all time.

**May Adonai grant His people strength;** may Adonai bless His people with peace.

**May our words** be pleasing to the Master of all.

*The Ark is opened.*

**Whenever the Ark was carried** forward, Moses would say: Arise, Adonai! May Your enemies be scattered; may Your foes be put to flight.

**Arise, Adonai,** to Your sanctuary, You and Your glorious Ark.

Let Your *Kohanim* be clothed in triumph; let Your faithful sing for joy.

For the sake of David Your servant, do not reject Your anointed.

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**וַיְהִי בְּנִסְעֵ הָאָרֶן** — **Whenever the Ark was carried.** Numbers 10:35. The verse describing the procession with the Ark in the wilderness.

**וַיִּנְסוּ מִשָּׂנְאֵיךָ מִפְּנֵיךָ** — **may Your foes be put to flight.** The Ark was carried into battle as a symbol of God's Presence with the people. When the rebellious people went to war against

the will of God, Moses did not let them take the Ark with them.

**קוּמָה יְהוָה** — **Arise, Adonai.** This verse and the following two verses are from Psalm 132:8–10, which describes the entry of the Ark to the tent David erected on Mount Zion. See II Samuel 6:17.

וְאָמַר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, הִנֵּה אֵלֵהֶינּוּ זֶה, קָוִינוּ לוֹ וַיּוֹשִׁיעֵנו,  
 זֶה יְהוָה קָוִינוּ לוֹ נִגְלֶה וְנִשְׁמַחָה בִּישׁוּעָתוֹ.  
 מְלֻכּוֹתֶיךָ מְלֻכּוֹת כָּל-עַלְמִים, וּמְמַשְׁלֶתֶךָ בְּכָל-דּוֹר וָדוֹר.  
 כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה, וְדַבֵּר יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם.  
 אֵב הֶרְחַמִּים, הֵיטִיבָה בְּרֻצּוֹנְךָ אֶת-צִיּוֹן,  
 תִּבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם.  
 כִּי בָךְ לִבֵּד בְּטַחְנוּ, מִלֶּךְ אֵל רַם וְנֹשֵׂא, אֲדוֹן עוֹלָמִים.

*All the תורה ספרי תורה are removed from the הקודש to be carried by congregants in seven הקפות through the sanctuary. After each הקפה, it is customary to dance with the תורה ספרי תורה, while singing appropriate songs.*

אָנָּה יְהוָה, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא. אָנָּה יְהוָה, הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא.  
 אָנָּה יְהוָה, עֲנֵנוּ בַּיּוֹם קְרָאֲנוּ.

*First הקפה*

אֱלֹהֵי הַרוּחֹת, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא. בּוֹחֵן לְכָבוֹת, הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא.  
 גּוֹאֵל חֶזֶק, עֲנֵנוּ בַּיּוֹם קְרָאֲנוּ.

*Second הקפה*

דוֹבֵר צְדָקוֹת, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא. הָדוֹר בְּלְבוּשׁוֹ, הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא.  
 וְתִיק וְחָסִיד, עֲנֵנוּ בַּיּוֹם קְרָאֲנוּ.

*Third הקפה*

זֶךְ וַיִּשֶׁר, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא. חוֹמַל נְלָיִם, הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא.  
 טוֹב וּמְטִיב, עֲנֵנוּ בַּיּוֹם קְרָאֲנוּ.

*Fourth הקפה*

יודֵעַ מַחְשְׁבוֹת, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא. פְּבִיר וְנֹאֵר, הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא.  
 לֹבֵשׁ צְדָקוֹת, עֲנֵנוּ בַּיּוֹם קְרָאֲנוּ.

*Fifth הקפה*

מִלֶּךְ עוֹלָמִים, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא. נֹאֵר וְאֲדִיר, הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא.  
 סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים, עֲנֵנוּ בַּיּוֹם קְרָאֲנוּ.

וְאָמַר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא — **And on that day.** Isaiah 25:9. A description of the day when God will restore Israel to its land and make the land fruitful again.

מְלֻכּוֹתֶיךָ — **Your sovereignty.** Psalm 145:13. A verse from Ashrei, the psalm recited three times daily.

כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה — **Torah shall come from Zion.** Isaiah 2:3. A part of Isaiah's vision of the time when all will come to recognize God and live by God's instruction.

אֵב הֶרְחַמִּים — **Creator of compassion.** Literally, "Merciful Father." The coming verse, which is a plea to God, is prefaced by addressing God directly in this way. All of the words from here until the conclusion of this section are those uttered before we take out the Torah on a regular Shabbat or Festival.

הֵיטִיבָה בְּרֻצּוֹנְךָ — **favor Zion.** Psalm 51:20. A plea for the rebuilding of Zion. The yearning for the restoration of Zion is so great that the theme is inserted into many places in the liturgy, even when the subject is quite different.

**For additional comments about the Torah Service for Shabbat and Festivals, see page 139.**

אָנָּה יְהוָה — **Adonai, we beseech You.** Each procession is preceded by these words. These verses make no direct reference to the Torah. Instead they resemble the words in the Hoshanot prayers (see page 200). The phrases "save us" and "cause us to prosper" are part of each of the coming verses. In this way the spirit of the Sukkot processions, which were imbued with rejoicing and confidence in God, continues on Simḥat Torah as well.

אֱלֹהֵי הַרוּחֹת — **God of all spirits.** Numbers 16:22. The procession of the Torah scrolls is accompanied by the chanting of this simple alphabetical poem. In each stanza three different titles for God are listed. These describe God not only as Sovereign and Savior, but also as one who is merciful and caring, helping the poor and upholding the falling.

Abudarham (b. 1370) comments that we read the last part of Deuteronomy, Moses' blessing of Israel (chapters 33–34), after the conclusion of the Sukkot holiday because that was the time when Solomon blessed the people after dedicating the Temple (I Kings 8:14). He suggests that we read the beginning of the Torah on that same day so that no one should be able to say that we are satisfied to have finished the Torah and are not interested in reading it again. He also mentions a geonic custom to say a special blessing upon completing and beginning the Torah, but rejects it since the blessing is not found in the talmudic writings.

Abudarham also mentions the custom for those who receive the honor of completing and beginning the Torah to make a feast of rejoicing for the community. In many places today it is customary for those honored in that way to sponsor a Kiddush for the congregation. This is similar to the custom of making a party for a *siyyum*, the completion of the learning of some sacred book.

And on that day people will say: Behold, this is our God,  
for whom we have waited, to redeem us.  
This is Adonai for whom we have yearned;  
let us rejoice and be glad in God's deliverance.

Your sovereignty is everlasting;  
Your dominion endures throughout all generations.

Torah shall come from Zion,  
the word of Adonai from Jerusalem.

Creator of compassion, favor Zion with Your goodness;  
build the walls of Jerusalem.

For in You alone do we put our trust,  
Sovereign, exalted God, eternal Master.

*All the Sifrei Torah are removed from the Ark,  
to be carried by congregants in seven processions  
(Hakafot) through the sanctuary.*

Adonai, we beseech You, save us. Adonai, we beseech You,  
cause us to prosper. Adonai, answer us when we call.  
Anenu v'yom kor'enu.

*First Hakafah*

God of all spirits, save us. Searcher of hearts, cause us to prosper.  
Mighty Redeemer, answer us when we call.  
Anenu v'yom kor'enu.

*Second Hakafah*

Proclaimer of righteousness, save us. God clothed in splendor, cause  
us to prosper. Everlastingly loving One, answer us when we call.  
Anenu v'yom kor'enu.

*Third Hakafah*

Pure and upright, save us. Gracious to the needy, cause us to prosper.  
Good and benevolent One, answer us when we call.  
Anenu v'yom kor'enu.

*Fourth Hakafah*

Knower of our thoughts, save us. Mighty and resplendent, cause us to  
prosper. God clothed in righteousness, answer us when we call.  
Anenu v'yom kor'enu.

*Fifth Hakafah*

Eternal Ruler, save us. Source of light and majesty, cause us to  
prosper. Upholder of the falling, answer us when we call.  
Anenu v'yom kor'enu.

הקפה Sixth

עוֹזֵר דְּלִים, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא. פּוֹדֶה וּמַצִּיל, הַצְּלִיחָה נָא.  
צוֹר עוֹלָמִים, עֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם קְרָאֲנוּ.

הקפה Seventh

קְדוֹשׁ וְנוֹרָא, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא. רְחוּם וְחַנוּן, הַצְּלִיחָה נָא.  
שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּרִית, עֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם קְרָאֲנוּ.  
תּוֹמֵךְ תְּמִימִים, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא. תִּקְיָה לְעַד, הַצְּלִיחָה נָא.  
תְּמִים בְּמַעֲשָׂיו, עֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם קְרָאֲנוּ.

In the evening, we read from one ספר תורה, and all the rest are returned to the ארון הקודש.

In the morning, we read from three ספרי תורה, and the others are returned to the ארון הקודש.

The Torah service continues with שמע ישראל, page 141.

The תהלה is called to the תורה as follows:

מְרֻשּׁוֹת הָאֵל הַגְּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא  
אֶפְתָּח פִּי בְּשִׁירָה וּבְזִמְרָה,  
לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לְדָר בְּהוֹרָא  
שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ בִּירְאָתוֹ הַטְּהוֹרָה,  
וְהִגִּיעֵנוּ לְשִׂמְחַת בְּשִׂמְחַת הַתּוֹרָה,  
הַמְשַׁמְחַת לֵב וְעֵינַיִם מְאִירָה,  
הַמְאַרְכֶּת יָמִים וּמוֹסַפֵּת גְּבוּרָה  
לְאַהֲבִיָּה וּלְשׁוֹמְרֵיהָ בְּצוּי וְאַהֲרָה.  
וּבְכֵן יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶי הַגְּבוּרָה לְתַת חַיִּים וְחֶסֶד וְנֶגֶד וְעֶטְרָה

Male:

לְ — בֵּן — הַנְּבָחַר לְהַשְׁלִים הַתּוֹרָה.  
עֲמֹד עֲמֹד עֲמֹד — בֵּן — , חֲתַן הַתּוֹרָה,  
וּבְשֹׁכֵר זֶה תִּזְכֶּה מֵאֵל נוֹרָא לְרֵאוֹת בְּנִים וּבְנֵי בְנִים  
עוֹסְקִים בַּתּוֹרָה. יַעֲמֹד — בֵּן — , חֲתַן הַתּוֹרָה.

Female:

לְ — בַּת — הַנְּבָחַרְת לְהַשְׁלִים הַתּוֹרָה.  
עֲמֹדֵי עֲמֹדֵי עֲמֹדֵי — בַּת — , כַּלַּת הַתּוֹרָה,  
וּבְשֹׁכֵר זֶה תִּזְכֶּי מֵאֵל נוֹרָא לְרֵאוֹת בְּנִים וּבְנֵי בְנִים  
עוֹסְקִים בַּתּוֹרָה. תַּעֲמֹד — בַּת — , כַּלַּת הַתּוֹרָה.

Triumph of the Democratic Spirit

So powerful was the hold of Simhat Torah upon the people that the Haftarah ordained by the Talmud (Megillah 31a) for the day (1 Kings 8:22ff.) was set aside and replaced by the opening chapter of Joshua, the logical continuation of Deuteronomy. Authorities like the Tosafists and Rabbi Isaac ben Moses of Vienna (thirteenth century) were at a loss to find a legal basis for the change, but the new character of the day proved more powerful than legal precedents. Thus the *Shulhan Arukh* codified the new practice with no reference to the older Talmudic decision.

Having created virtually a new festival, the people surrounded it with a large number of customs and observances, many of which have since disappeared. It is significant that in countless instances these innovations represented not merely an addition to the existing Halakhah, or even its modification, but a direct contradiction, or so it seemed to many scholars who raised varied and weighty legal objections to them. Yet in practically every instance the people's will prevailed and the practices remained.

Rab Hai Gaon (eleventh century) was asked about the custom of bringing incense to the synagogue and burning it before the scrolls, and he decided, on the basis of law (Betzah 22b), that it was forbidden. However he was able to permit the decorating of scrolls with women's veils, rings, and other ornaments, a practice which also raised some legal difficulties. By the end of the fifteenth century . . . dancing in synagogues became widespread, a clear violation of the Talmudic prohibition: "These acts are forbidden because of *shvut* [prohibitions to prevent desecration of the festival] . . . dancing" (Betzah 36b). . . . Why did the Rabbis yield on all these issues, and actually seek to find a legal basis for their leniency?

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Rabbi Joseph Colon (fifteenth century), in his Responsa (Root 9), lays down a fundamental principle: "A custom designed to honor the Torah sets aside even the prohibition of *shvut*, such as dancing on a festival." This principle may be utilized . . . significantly today in the evolution of Jewish law. It offers a fruitful distinction between two types of innovation. On the one hand, there are new, non-Halakhic practices among the people which are designed to advance the vitality of Judaism and which should therefore be welcomed and validated by the legal authorities. On the other hand, we are confronted by acts of violation and neglect symptomatic of the decline of Jewish observance and dignity, which must be opposed and overcome, if Judaism is to endure as a vital force.

The development of the festival revealed not merely the flexibility inherent in Jewish tradition, but also its democratic character. The people had created Simhat Torah, they had given it its character, and they were determined to possess it as their own. The jovial *hakafot*, in which the poor as well as the rich, the unlearned no less than the scholars, shared the honor and joy of carrying the Torah scrolls in procession are a case in point. Neither the Geonim nor the early Decisors (*Poskim*), as late as Rabbi Jacob ben Asher in the *Tur* (fourteenth century) or Rabbi Joseph Karo in the *Beth Joseph* (sixteenth century), make any reference to this custom. The evening *hakafot* are first mentioned by Rabbi Isaac Tyrnau in his *Minhagim* (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), and by Rabbi Moses Isserles . . .

The most striking illustration of the strength of the democratic impulse is afforded by the reading of the Torah on Simhat Torah. According to the law, all the festivals have a fixed number of [those] called up for the reading of the Torah. Rabbinic authorities differed as to whether the proper number was five, six, or ten. All these discussions became superfluous as the custom arose of calling all men in the synagogue to the Torah. To make this possible, the Torah section was read again and again, and to expedite matters the practice arose of calling two men simultaneously to the Torah.

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#### *Sixth Hakafah*

Helper of the needy, save us. Redeemer, Deliverer, cause us to prosper. Rock everlasting, answer us when we call.

Anenu v'yom kor'enu.

#### *Seventh Hakafah*

Holy, awesome, save us. Merciful, compassionate, cause us to prosper. Upholder of the covenant, answer us when we call.

Anenu v'yom kor'enu.

Supporter of the innocent, save us. Eternal in power, cause us to prosper. Perfect in Your ways, answer us when we call.

Anenu v'yom kor'enu.

*In the evening, we read from one Sefer Torah,  
and all the rest are returned to the Ark.*

*In the morning, we read from three Sifrei Torah,  
and the others are returned to the Ark.*

*The Torah service continues with Sh'ma Yisra-el, page 141.*

*The **Ḥatan/Kallat HaTorah** is called to the Torah  
as follows:*

Requesting permission of God, mighty, awesome, and great,  
I lift my voice to sing and to celebrate,  
to praise the One who sustains us and dwells in light sublime,  
who has granted us life and allowed us to reach this time,  
enabling us to arrive at this day to rejoice  
in the Torah, which grants honor, as we lift up our voice.  
It brings pleasure to the heart and light to the eyes,  
and joy when we embrace its values we so prize.

May it be the will of the Almighty to grant blessings in profusion  
to \_\_\_\_\_, chosen for this reading of the Torah  
at its conclusion.

*Male:*

Arise, arise, arise, \_\_\_\_\_, *Ḥatan HaTorah*.

Through the merit of this deed  
may God grant you a privileged sight:  
To witness children and children's children  
immersed in Torah with delight.

*Female:*

Arise, arise, arise, \_\_\_\_\_, *Kallat HaTorah*.

Through the merit of this deed  
may God grant you a privileged sight:  
To witness children and children's children  
immersed in Torah with delight.

*The חתן/כלת בראשית is called to the תורה as follows:*

מְרֻשּׁוֹת מְרוֹמָם עַל כָּל-בְּרִכָּה וְשִׁירָה,  
 נוֹרָא עַל כָּל-תְּהִלָּה וְזִמְרָה,  
 חֲכָם לֵבָב וְאִמְיָץ פֶּחַ וְגִבּוֹרָה,  
 וּמוֹשֵׁל עוֹלָם אֲדוֹן כָּל-יִצְיָרָה.  
 וּמְרֻשּׁוֹת חֲבוּרַת צְדָק עֲדָה הַמְאַשְׁרָה,  
 קְבוּצִים פֶּה הַיּוֹם לְשִׁמְחַת תּוֹרָה,  
 וְנַעֲצָרִים לְסִיָּם וּלְהַחֲלֵל בְּגִיל וּבְמוֹרָא.  
 וּבִכֵּן נִסְכְּמֵתֵי דַעַת כָּלָם לְבִרְרָה.

*Male:*

יֵשֶׁן נְעֻשִׁית רֵאשׁוֹן לְמִצְוֵה גְמוּרָה,  
 מֵה רַב טוֹבָךָ וּמִשְׁכִּרְתָּךְ יִתְרָה.  
 עֵמֹד עֵמֹד עֵמֹד \_\_\_\_\_ בֶּן \_\_\_\_\_,  
 חֲתָן בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא.  
 מְרֻשּׁוֹת הַקְּהָל הַקְּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה לְבָרְךָ אֵל גְּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא,  
 אֲמֵן יַעֲנוּ אַחֲרָיִךְ הַכֹּל מְהֵרָה.  
 יַעֲמֹד \_\_\_\_\_ בֶּן \_\_\_\_\_, חֲתָן בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא.

*Female:*

יֵשֶׁן נְעֻשִׁית רֵאשׁוֹנָה לְמִצְוֵה גְמוּרָה,  
 מֵה רַב טוֹבָךָ וּמִשְׁכִּרְתָּךְ יִתְרָה.  
 עֵמְדֵי עֵמְדֵי עֵמְדֵי \_\_\_\_\_ בַּת \_\_\_\_\_,  
 כָּלַת בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא.  
 מְרֻשּׁוֹת הַקְּהָל הַקְּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה לְבָרְךָ אֵל גְּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא,  
 אֲמֵן יַעֲנוּ אַחֲרָיִךְ הַכֹּל מְהֵרָה.  
 תַּעֲמֹד \_\_\_\_\_ בַּת \_\_\_\_\_, כָּלַת בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא.

Both these devices were not free from Halakhic difficulties, but the principle that “all Israel share in the Torah” overrode all hesitations and became the accepted practice.

This did not mark the outermost limit of the democratic spirit. The participation of all Jews in the celebration was carried further and led to the development of a unique custom called *Vekhol Hanearim*. When Deuteronomy 33:27ff. is about to be read, an adult is called to the Torah “together with all the youths.” All the children come to the pulpit and, standing under a large tallit spread over their heads like a canopy, they repeat the blessing over the Torah with the adult. Following the benedictions, the verse Genesis 48:16 is recited by the congregation: *The angel who has redeemed me from all harm — bless the lads. In them may my name be recalled, and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they be a teeming multitude upon the earth.*

The true spirit of Simhat Torah is admirably reflected in the story which the Hasidic Rabbi Naph-tali Ropshitzer was wont to tell on himself. He once noticed how an ignorant huckster was celebrating Simhat Torah with unrestrained boisterousness. “Why all this enthusiasm?” the Rabbi asked. “Have you studied so much Torah this past year that you indulge yourself so completely in the rejoicing?” “Rabbi,” the huckster replied, “suppose my brother has a celebration. Have I no share in the festivities?”

The participation of every Jew in the ritual of the day is a dramatic representation of the truth that Torah is both the duty and the privilege of every Jew, youth and adult. That principle must be retained, stressed, and extended today.

Whatever changes Simhat Torah may undergo in the future, it illustrates the process of growth and evolution in the past. . . . Everywhere the enrichment of Jewish rites and practices will prove most rewarding and enduring when the process follows the line of development already marked out in Jewish tradition.

*Robert Gordis*

The person honored with the last *aliyah* in the reading cycle (the last part of Deuteronomy) and the person honored with the first *aliyah* in the new cycle (the beginning of Genesis) are singled out for special praise. These are considered prestigious honors and are reserved for outstanding members of the congregation. To symbolize the closeness of the relationship between the Jew and the Torah, the word “bride” (*kallah*) or “groom” (*hatan*) are applied to these honorees. The one reading the concluding section is the spouse of the Torah, having completed the reading of the entire Torah. The one honored with the beginning section is the spouse of *B’reshit*, the book that is now begun. God’s blessings are invoked upon these honorees in poetic terms.

*The Ḥatan/Kallat B’reshit is called to the Torah as follows:*

With permission of the One  
exalted beyond all song and adoration,  
awesome beyond all praise and acclamation,  
the essence of wisdom and power,  
eternal Ruler, Master of creation —  
and with permission of this just and joyous congregation,  
gathered here to rejoice in the Torah, filled with elation,  
assembled to complete its reading  
and to begin again with joy and veneration —  
I concur with all assembled here in happy affirmation.  
In being chosen for this beginning you set a fine example.  
Your portion is so goodly; your reward will be so ample.

*Male:*

Arise, arise, arise, \_\_\_\_\_, *Ḥatan B’reshit Bara*,  
to greet the great and awesome God with adoration,  
with the permission of this holy congregation.  
We will respond “Amen” to your blessing, in acclamation.

*Female:*

Arise, arise, arise, \_\_\_\_\_, *Kallat B’reshit Bara*,  
to greet the great and awesome God with adoration,  
with the permission of this holy congregation.  
We will respond “Amen” to your blessing, in acclamation.