

שמחת תורה. The famous sefer ושוורש העבודה writes that a person who fully rejoices with the Torah on שמחת תורה is given the promise that the Torah will remain in his family by him, his whole family, and by all future דורות as well. R' Elimelech Biderman quotes R Chaim Vital, who describes how his rebbi, the אר"י הקדוש, would dance with all of his might in honor of the Torah. He would go from one בית מדרש to another to dance with every ספר תורה in each shul. The sefer מעשה רב describes that the ווילנא גאון was extremely joyous when he danced before the ספר תורה. The Satmar Rebbe would dance until the point of collapse on שמחת תורה, using every ounce of energy. When he was asked how he had the strength to dance with such enthusiasm after the exhausting עבודה of the previous few weeks, culminating with the intense תפילות of הושענא רבה, he smiled and made a joke, saying שמיני רגל בפני עצמו, which means that שמיני עצרת is a יום טוב by itself, but he said it was "On שמיני עצרת, one gets a fresh set of legs" רגל also meaning leg.

What is the secret? What is the connection between having a fantastic פרייליך הקפות and the ברכה of having pure דורות that will follow in the ways of the תורה? The ישמח ישראל explains that there's a very sad pasuk in sefer שמואל that discusses that שאול בן שאול disdained דוד המלך dancing with all of his might in front of ארון קודש. And what was her punishment? She never had a child until the day of her death. The מפורשים discuss that she had children before, but from that day on, no more children. Now we know that the rule is מידה כנגד מידה. And we also know that a positive מידה is more powerful than a negative מידה. If her disparagement of his dancing before the תורה for כבוד התורה generated such a punishment, then appreciating התורה כבוד and exerting oneself to dance for the תורה has the opposite effect, the ברכה of קינדערלאך. Good to know.

R' Elimelech Biderman says that one of the friends in his חבורה was already married for several years, but his and his wife's תפילות had not yet been answered. His name is R' Shiya Berlin, and he lives in בית שמש. One year on הושענא רבה, R' Shiya saw these words of the ישמח ישראל, and when שמחת תורה arrived, he invested extraordinary efforts in dancing, putting in not just physical energy, but his entire dignity. He became a ווילדע חיה. He leaped and spun in front of the תורה. He gave the shul a שמחת תורה which they had never had before. His first child was born nine months later on the eleventh day of תמוז. Two years later, did it again, exerting himself for כבוד התורה, and once again, he had a baby in the following תמוז.

"Right here", R' Biderman pointed to the door of his shul, "A yid came in to see me this year in סיון. He wanted to talk to me, but I was on my way into shul. He said he only needed half of a minute. 'I'm making a ברית tomorrow', he said. 'מזל טוב!' I replied 'You should have Yiddish נחת', and I gave him all the ברכות. But then he stopped me. 'We were married for 10 years and this is our first child', he told me. 'I heard the story you said about R' Shiya last הושענא רבה and I resolved to do the same thing. I'm not the same person as R' Shiya. I didn't feel that I could do it in my בית מדרש, I couldn't make a fool of myself in my בית מדרש. So I davened in the Vizhnitz מושב זקנים, the old age home. I danced like I never did before, focusing only on כבוד התורה. And tomorrow we're making a ברית.'

What a nice story. I wanted to share that with you, and may you have a very שמחה'דיק and כבוד התורה'דיק שמחת תורה.

