

A Crown of Slippers From the writings of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch

One Simchat Torah, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem told his disciples:

On Simchat Torah everyone sleeps in a little, because of the *hakafot* and the festivities of the previous evening. The heavenly angels, however, don't say *lchaimon* Simchat Torah, and they arose for the morning prayers at the usual time. But the angels found themselves with nothing to do: as the Talmud tells us, the angels cannot sing G-d's praises in the heavens until Israel sings G-d's praises on earth. So they decided to do some cleaning up in heaven in the meantime.

They found heaven littered with strange objects: torn slippers and broken heels. The angels are accustomed to finding *tzitzit*, *tefillin*, and similar things up there, but they had never come across the likes of these. They decided to ask the angel Michael, the supernal advocate of the Jewish people, if he knew what this was all about.

"Yes," admitted Michael, "this is my merchandise. These are the remains of last night's *hakafot*, at which Jews danced with the Torah. Michael proceeded to sort the tattered shoes by community: these are from Kaminkeh, these are from Mezeritch, etc.

"The archangel Metat," boasted Michael, referring to the most prestigious angel in the heavenly court, "ties crowns for G-d out of Israel's prayers. Today, I shall fashion an even more glorious crown for the Almighty out of these torn shoes."

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21 October

Bereshit

Shabbat Begins: 5:40 pm

Shabbat Ends: 6:40 pm