


**CHABAD**  
  
**RESEARCH UNIT**

שבת..... *for Friday nights* ..... קדש

**Friday 5 March 2010 - 19 Adar 5770**  
**Sedra Ki Tisa**

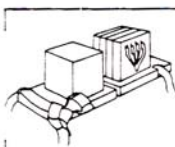
**SACRED SCRIPT**

**T**HE TORAH SCROLL EXPRESSES THE EXALTEDLY HOLY IN PHYSICAL form. The Hebrew letters of the text are carefully inscribed on parchment, following the special rules of the craft of the Scribe. The Scroll is treated with great reverence and with special care. If it is dropped, G-d forbid, traditionally the congregation fasts. An old, worn out Scroll must be buried like a person in consecrated ground.

In a milder form this sanctity extends also to the text of the Torah when printed in a book. The Hebrew text is sacred: it is the Written Torah.

This bonding of the holy with physical reality through the Written Torah relates back to the Sedra<sup>1</sup>, which tells us about the forty days and nights which Moses spent on Mount Sinai.

At the conclusion of this time G-d gave Moses the two Tablets of stone on which were engraved the Ten Commandments. The Torah tells us that these Tablets “were written with G-d’s script”<sup>2</sup>. The text on the Tablets had a Divine quality.



**Celebrating the Bar Mitzva of**  
**Levi Halevi Loewenthal שלי**  
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This helps us understand something of why the Torah has such mysterious power. It is not simply a book. According to the Rambam (Maimonides, 1135-1204), the Jewish people had books before the Torah was given. For example, Abraham wrote down his ideas about G-d and taught them to Isaac<sup>3</sup>. Yet the Divine writing on the Tablets and the Torah Scroll in the Synagogue expresses something more than a book, even a very wise book written by a very great man.

The Rabbis tell us that the Giving of the Torah constituted breaking through a barrier, the separation between the spiritual and the physical. These constituted two different realms, which before then could not meet.

At Sinai they joined. The Divine broke through into the physical world. G-d expressed His teaching in a physical, engraved text: words carved in the stone. They were not just sublime ideas. They were and are “written with G-d’s script”, here in the world for us to read and live by.

Due to the power of Sinai, this special quality is transmitted to the entire Written Torah<sup>4</sup>. Every letter in a Torah Scroll is significant, even letters which do not affect the meaning of a word, nor its pronunciation. The Written Torah is a direct Divine communication, and it is therefore holy in itself. It is the embodiment of G-d’s teaching, drawn from the eternal Infinite, yet taking practical form in the physical world.

Together with the Written Torah come all its explanations, called the Oral Torah. These are included in the teachings which G-d imparted to Moses during the forty days and nights on the mountain. The Sages tell us that during the days, Moses learnt the Written Torah, and during the nights, the Oral<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, all the details of the Oral Torah are somehow hinted at in the text of the Written Torah.

From the Written and Oral Torah emerges Divine guidance on how to live as a Jew, and indeed as a human being. Through following these teachings each man and woman can embody the union of the spiritual and the physical, expressing the holiness of infinite G-d in the practical details of daily life.

1. Exodus 30:11-34:35. 2. Exodus 32:16. 3. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Idolatry, 1:3. The *Book of Creation* is also attributed to Abraham. 4. See the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s *Likkutei Sichot* vol.20, p.183. 5. Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa. sec.28.

Torah teachings are holy - please treat this page with care  
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### SEDRA KI TISA

#### **REPENTANCE**

Leah was very upset. She had done something wrong, in fact, as she felt it now, looking back, something quite awful!

This is what happened: Leah and her friends were in school on Friday, they were talking about what they were going to do on Sunday. "Leah" said Shirah, her best friend, quietly, "let's go together to the new shopping center which just opened up in Hoxton".

"Great idea" whispered Leah, "but let's just go ourselves, it will be more fun".

An hour or so later, after school, Michelle asked Leah "What are you doing on Sunday?"  
"Well, I'm just going to laze around at home, just take it easy" answered Leah.

On Sunday, as planned, Leah went with Shirah to the new shopping centre. It was great fun. They saw bright new shops, including a really stunning Harrods, which had this mini-plane swinging round the ceiling! It was amazing!

Monday in school, Shirah and Leah were telling everybody about the new mall, and how much fun they had there. Suddenly Michelle approached Leah and said quietly "I thought you were going to stay home on Sunday!?". She didn't wait for a response, just moved away like a shadow. Leah felt a stab of pain in her heart. She could see that Michelle was really upset, and really hurt.

Now Leah was sitting at home on the couch and thinking what should she do? She had told a lie! Even more, she had really hurt somebody else's feelings!

Her little brother Yoni was playing with his toys on the floor. "This is a calf" said Yoni, holding up a small model calf. "Wow!" said Leah, "that's right, Yoni. Not a cow, but a calf."

"My teacher told me that the Jews made a golden calf, and it was a bad thing" said Yoni seriously. "Then they were sorry."

Suddenly Leah had a flash of insight in her mind. The Jews indeed made a golden calf, which was something terrible. G-d had been really angry at them! Then Moses asked for forgiveness, and G-d forgave them. She remembered her teacher saying: "This shows us the power of Repentance".

'How do I repent?' thought Leah. 'I can promise myself that I am not going to tell a lie again. But what about the pain I caused Michelle?' Then she thought: 'if I ask Michelle to forgive me, maybe she will... At least, even if she doesn't, it might make her feel better.'

Next day in school, at break, Leah found an opportunity. "Michelle" said Leah shyly, looking down, "I know I did something very wrong, telling you a lie about staying at home. I'm really upset..." She glanced up, Michelle was just staring at her. "Would you possibly forgive me?" Leah turned completely red.

Michelle looked at her and said "Yes" and turned away. Maybe she was crying. Leah felt like crying too. "Listen," said Leah, blushing even more, "do you want to go out with me next Sunday?" Michelle nodded, but couldn't speak. Then the bell rang, and the two girls walked across the playground, back into the school building, together.

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