


**CHABAD**  
  
**RESEARCH UNIT**

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


**Friday 30 August 2013 - 24 Elul 5773**  
**Sedra Nitzavim-Vayelech**

**BRIDGES**

**M**EDIATION, BRIDGES AND CONNECTIONS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF LIFE. When we do not have them, we often find oppression, aggression or simply loneliness. Human beings are created to relate to each other and to relate with G-d, but very often the links are hidden, concealed under blankets of ego, self-interest and materialism. The double Sedra<sup>1</sup> this week, a few days before Rosh Hashanah, the New Year, expresses the theme of bridges on several levels.

At the beginning of the first Sedra there is a beautiful statement about the variety of the Jewish people and the fact that despite this variety, all are one. The Sedra lists leaders, heads of tribes, elders, men, women, children, proselytes, hewers of wood and water carriers. All are standing together, unified, says Moses. Some kind of remarkable bonding and linkage is in evidence, dissolving the barrier between the lofty national leaders and the apparently unassuming servicers of society.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe points out that towards the end of the double Sedra there is another example of the same concept of bridging and connection. The Sedra describes<sup>2</sup> how Moses finished writing the complete Torah, the original parchment Scroll of which we have an exact copy in every Synagogue today. He then gave it to the Levites to

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put in the Holy of Holies, together with the Golden Ark containing the Tablets of the Law which came from Sinai.

The Rebbe points out that this act provides an important bridge. The sapphire Tablets of the Law which Moses got from Mount Sinai express an ethereal level of holiness and of Divine teaching. The words of the Ten Commandments were *engraved* on the Tablets, signifying a special level of unity. The sacred sapphire and the Divine wording were one. The Tablets were kept in the Golden Ark in the Holy of Holies, an awesomely holy place which could only be entered once a year, on Yom Kippur, by the High Priest.

By contrast the Torah Scroll is an object which, although very holy, enters the world of human beings. It is housed in the Synagogue, regularly read from in public, and men and boys dance with it on Simchat Torah. The sacred words are not engraved, they are carefully and beautifully written on the parchment in ink. The ink letters are in a sense separate from the parchment because they carry the Torah teachings into a world of apparent separation.

This means that the Torah Scroll which was placed together with the Golden Ark in the Holy of Holies is a bridge for the exalted holiness of the Tablets from Sinai to enter this daily world.

From there the teachings of the Torah flow outwards: from the Holy of Holies to the outermost parts of the Temple, then to Jerusalem and to the Land of Israel, and onwards to other countries, reaching also the non-Jews, in the form of the Seven Noachide Laws. Through these teachings the apparently divided and fragmented world becomes unified, as it will be in the time of the Messiah, also mentioned in the Sedra<sup>3</sup>.

The message of creating bridges is particularly relevant before Rosh Hashanah. This is an exceptionally holy time. Yet the goal is to create bridges from Rosh Hashanah to the rest of the year, so that every day becomes a sacred moment and an opportunity to connect with G-d. This will draw us closer to building every other kind of bridge, bringing true peace to a fragmented world<sup>4</sup>.

1. Deuteronomy 29:9-31:30. 2. Deut. 31:22-26. From the time of Sinai Moses had been gradually writing the Scroll, "dictated" to him from G-d. 3. Deut. 30:1-6.

4. Based freely on the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *Likkutei Sichot* vol 2 pp. 407-8.

Torah teachings are holy - please treat this page with care

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*SEDRA NITZAVIM*

***IT IS EASY AFTER ALL***

The classroom filled with laughter and chatter as the boys settled down in their seats, waiting for their teacher to come in. 'Hey, Aaron; did you do your homework assignment last night?' Joseph asked Aaron, who sat next to him in class. 'No. I didn't. It was too hard!'

No it wasn't!' Joseph began to argue, but he was hushed by the entry of the teacher, Rabbi Bloom. To Aaron's chagrin, the teacher slowly went round the classroom checking the homework assignments from the night before. Aaron began to feel really nervous as he realised that he was almost the only one who had not done his homework.

'I doubt he will accept my excuse', he thought to himself gloomily.

As expected, when Rabbi Bloom discovered that Aaron had not done his homework he was upset with him. 'Come and see me after class', he said, with a stern look on his face. Aaron frowned. He hated getting into trouble.

However, soon his worries were forgotten as Rabbi Bloom told the story of how Moses spoke to the Jews just before they entered the Land of Israel

'...All the Jews stood and listened as Moses spoke to them, even the very old people and the little children. He

said to them: “do you think it is hard to keep the Torah laws? – Well, let me tell you, the laws are not in the heavens and riot across the sea. No; they are very close by”. Moses was telling them that if a person wants, it is very easy to keep the laws of the Torah. In fact if a person wants he can do anything, because Hashem gives us the willpower to do the right thing...’

Aaron listened carefully to what was being said. For some reason the thought of his homework kept popping into his mind ‘It wasn’t really that hard’, he thought, ‘I mean, everyone else seemed to be able to do it. Plus, Hashem gives us the power to do Mitzvot (good deeds), and doing homework must be a Mitzva’.

After class Aaron stayed behind to talk to Rabbi Bloom, as he had been instructed. He waited nervously while Rabbi Bloom finished putting his things in his briefcase. ‘Aaron,’ Rabbi Bloom said, looking up from his desk, ‘you know I’m upset with you for not doing your homework - I’m even surprised, I’m sure you could have done it if you tried!’

Aaron looked at the floor in shame. Suddenly he looked up at Rabbi Bloom and he said, ‘Rabbi Bloom, I listened very carefully to your class today - when you spoke about how Hashem gives us the power to do Mitzvot and all we have to do is want to do the right thing...’

Rabbi Bloom nodded and motioned for him to continue. Aaron took a deep breath, ‘Well, all I can say is that I’m sorry for not doing it on time, but you will have it first thing tomorrow morning!’

‘Wonderful!’ said Rabbi Bloom. ‘You have just made the best step possible in preparation for the New Year, Rosh Hashana. You have realised that doing the right thing is easy after all!’

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