


**CHABAD**  
  
**RESEARCH UNIT**

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

**Friday 18 September 2015 - 5 Tishrei 5776**  
**Sedra Vayelech - Yom Kippur**


**COMPLETING THE TORAH SCROLL**

**T**HE SEDRA<sup>1</sup> CONCERNS THE LAST DAY IN THE LIFE OF MOSES. On this day G-d transmitted to him the concluding passage of the Torah Scroll and he wrote this down. It was a kind of Divine “dictation”. The Sages tell us Moses wrote the last twelve sentences in tears, because they speak of his death, without his being able to enter the Promised Land and fulfil the special Mitzvot which can only be carried out there<sup>2</sup>.

Having completed the Torah Scroll, he then gave it to the Levites. They would look after it. The Scroll was placed in the Holy of Holies, together with the Golden Ark containing the Tablets of the Ten Commandments.

Before it was placed in the Holy of Holies, twelve copies of the Scroll were made - one for each of the Tribes. During the following generations, further copies were made of the Torah in an unbroken line of continuity which includes the many thousands of Torah Scrolls of our own time.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe teaches: each Jew is like a letter in the Torah Scroll. This means that each individual, whether man or woman,



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 Dedicated by her Son Dr Roger Gewolb שי'

elderly person or child, is infinitely important. In a Torah Scroll, if one single letter is missing or is damaged, the entire Scroll is unfit for use until it has been repaired by a Scribe. In the same way every single individual is vital for the wellbeing of the entire Jewish people.

### **THE SHABBAT OF RETURN**

This Shabbat is called is the Shabbat of Return, Shabbat Shuvah. The name comes from the Haftorah, which begins with the words *Shuvah Yisrael*, “Return, Israel, to G-d, for you have stumbled in your sin”<sup>3</sup>. The purpose of the laws of the Torah is to connect the individual with G-d. Every single law helps to strengthen this connection. There are 613 spiritual strands which join the soul to its infinite source, corresponding to the 613 Mitzvot (laws) of the Torah.

If a person transgresses a law of the Torah, he weakens, or even breaks, one of these strands. The accumulative effect is to separate the person from G-d. He feels less “spiritual”. He might think of this as ‘freedom’. “I don’t care about such things,” he says. “I do as I like”. In fact he or she is more trapped in the confines of a materialistic world.

“Return” is the movement back, to reconnect with G-d. The broken strands are repaired. At this time of year there is a new opportunity to maintain and strengthen one’s bond with the Divine.

### **TEN POINT PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**

Which points of connection might need strengthening? Each of us might benefit by considering how we score in the following ten areas of activity. 1) Love of one’s fellow 2) Supporting Jewish education for oneself and others 3) Torah study 4) Putting on Tefilin, for males 5) Having kosher Mezuzot on one’s doors 6) Giving charity 7) Having Jewish books 8) Lighting Shabbat candles, primarily for women, and girls from the age of 3 should light one candle 9) Eating Kosher food 10) Family purity (Mikveh).

In one or more of these ten areas one might find room for improvement. The decision to make a little step forward makes Yom Kippur a more meaningful and luminous day. Enjoy!

1. Deuteronomy ch.31. 2. See Rashi to Deut.34:5. 3. Hosea 14:2.

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*SEDRA VAYELECH - YOM KIPPUR*

***FAMILY REUNION***

The large sprawling garden of the Klein residence was filled with laughter and conversation. All four of the Klein children had come to their parents' house with their spouses and children in honour of Mr Klein's 70th birthday. A large buffet table was set up with delicious food the aunts had prepared and the uncles and older cousins kept everyone entertained with jokes and reminiscences from when they were young.

"Remember when Zack climbed onto the roof of the wooden shed we used to have right over there in the corner?" Uncle David slapped his knee and chortled. "He was able to balance on it for approximately two and a half seconds before he fell down and nearly broke his leg."

Zack grinned. "Hey, it was worth the climb up, even if it was just for two seconds!"  
Everyone hollered with laughter.

"You know children," Grandpa Klein, the birthday boy, said thoughtfully, "this beautiful party that you prepared for me, with the whole family coming together, reminds me of something."

"Of what, Grandpa?" little Pinny asked.

"Of this week's Sedra, Vayelech. It talks about Hakhel."

"Ha-what?" eleven year old Naomi asked.

"Hakhel," Grandpa Klein repeated. "Hakhel was an event that

happened every seven years, the year after the Sabbatical year finished, when all the Jews came together from all over and gathered in the Holy Temple on the holiday of Sukkot.”

“Like we’re gathering together right now,” said Grandma Klein, smiling at her family.

“That’s right.” Grandpa nodded.

“What did they do at this event?” five year old Isaac asked curiously.

“The King read from parts of the Book of Devarim (Deuteronomy) in the Torah, to remind the Jews where they come from and what happened to them.” Grandpa said, stroking his grey beard. “Like we were just doing now, remembering when we were younger and everything that happened then. So too, the Jews were reminded of their past.”

“But it’s even more than that,” Grandma added seriously. “It wasn’t only remembering what happened in the past. It was reminding the whole Jewish nation that they have to strengthen their bond to G-d and the Torah, and fulfil all of His commandments.”

“Yes, it was a time of unity for all the Jews,” Uncle David said. “A time when they got together and rejoiced.”

“Like we’re doing right now!” Pinny cried out with excitement.

“That’s right.” Uncle Zack beamed at him. “And did you know Pinny, that all the Jews are one big family? And this year, a Hakhel year, is a specially good time to get together!”

“Even if you don’t have a 70th birthday” said Grandpa Klein. “Just find an excuse to get together, and enjoy!”

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