



SIMCHAT TORAH

This week, we will be reading Parshat V'zot Habracha, but not on Shabbat! Rather, we'll be reading it on this coming Friday morning, which is, of course, Simchat Torah.

V'zot Habracha does not get its own Shabbat like all the other parshiot, rather, it is always read on Simchat Torah, whatever day of the week it falls on.

The reading of this Parsha on Simchat Torah seems like somewhat of a bittersweet occasion. In it, we read of the final blessings given by Moshe Rabeinu to each Shevet (tribe), and then of the account of his death and personal burial by G-d Himself. The mood is somewhat somber as we read of the loss of Israel's greatest leader. Yet, at the same time, we are rejoicing the festival of Simchat Torah because we have finished, once again, a full cycle of yearly Torah readings!

Actually, however, we're not just celebrating the completion of the Torah. We ALSO are rejoicing in the new beginning! Right after we finish V'zot Habracha, the next Sefer Torah is taken out, and we start reading right from the beginning of Bereshit. Why? Because one is NEVER finished learning the Torah. Each time we go through it, there are new and exciting things to learn and discover! So, no matter how much you have learned of the Torah, this celebration is for you! Get up and dance! And if you're young enough, get up on someone's shoulders and dance!

May all of our beginnings and endings be worthy of celebration, and may we rejoice with the Torah in good spirits! CHAZAK CHAZAK V'NIT'CHAZEK!

CHAG SA'MEACH and Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Cohen
