



Reb Zusha of Hanipoli sat in his home immersed in his Torah learning, when the sounds wafting caused him to glance out the open window. Passing in front of his house was a wedding procession leading the bride and groom on their way. Reb Zusha immediately stood up and went out into the street where abandoning constraint he danced with unbounded joy. He circled the young couple and the other celebrants for a few minutes of great joy and then returned to his home and his study.

His family members watched his actions with great interest. They suggested to him that his dancing before a wedding procession was not befitting a person of his stature in the community.

To their comment he replied, "Let me tell you a story. When I was young I studied under the famous Maggid of Zlotchov, Reb Yechiel Michel. One day I did something against his wishes and he rebuked me severely. I was terribly hurt by his reaction, and he, sensing anguish, soon came over to me and apologized for the harshness of his response, saying, 'Reb Zusha, please forgive me for my angry words.'

"I was very comforted by his apology and replied, 'Of course, I forgive you, Rebbe.'"

"The same night before I went to sleep, he again came to me and asked my forgiveness. I was surprised, and repeated that I forgave him totally.

"I lay in bed for a while thinking about the incident, when the father of my Rebbe, Reb Yitzchak of Drohovich, appeared to me from the Next World. He said to me, 'I had the merit to leave behind me in the world below my only son, and you want to destroy him because he insulted you?'

"Please, Rebbe, don't say such a thing! I don't want to hurt him and I have certainly forgiven him completely and wholeheartedly! What more can I do than I have already done?"

"What you have done is still not complete forgiveness. Follow me and I will show you the real meaning of complete forgiveness.'

"So, I got out of my bed and followed him until we reached the local mikva. Reb Yitzchak told me to immerse myself 3 times, each time saying and feeling that I forgave his son. I obeyed his wishes and immersed 3 times, each time with the intention of forgiving my Rebbe.

"When I emerged from the mikva I looked at Reb Yitzchak and saw that his face was so radiant that I was unable to gaze upon it. I asked him where that light came from and he replied: 'All my life I have carefully observed three things to which the Sage Rabbi Nechunya ben HaKana attributed his long life: he never sought honor at the expense of the degradation of his fellow; he never went to sleep without forgiving anyone who might have offended or injured him that day; he was always generous with his money. Reb Yitzchak then told me that the very same level which can be achieved through these things can also be reached through joy.

"And that is why when I saw the wedding procession passing in front of our house, I ran outside to partake of the festivities and to add to the simcha of the bride and groom."

Once Rabbi Shmelke of Nikolsburg came to his Rebbe, Reb Dov Ber of Mezerich, with an inquiry: "How is it possible to fulfill the teaching of our rabbis that one is obligated to say a blessing on bad news just as one would on good news?"

The Maggid answered him by instructing him to go to the shul. "When you get there ask for Reb Zusha of Hanipoli and ask him to explain that dictum to you."

Reb Shmelke did as his Rebbe told him, and when he found Reb Zusha he asked him the question. Reb Zusha was a man who had endured great hardship throughout his entire life. He replied to Reb Shmelke as follows: "I am very surprised that my

rebbe sent you to me, of all people. A question like yours should be addressed to a person who has, G-d-forbid actually experienced something terrible in life. Whereas I, thank G-d, know nothing about those frightful things. You see, I have experienced nothing but good all my life. I'm sorry, but I cannot answer your question since I know nothing about evil occurrences."

Reb Shmelke returned to the Maggid with his question answered. He now understood the meaning of the teaching that one is obliged to bless the evil that occurs in life as well as the good, for when man accepts a Divine edict with complete faith and trust, there is no longer a perception of evil inherent in the experiences.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the Weekly Torah Portion

Moses gathered all the congregation...and said to them: These are the words which the L-rd has commanded, that you should do them (Ex. 35:1)

As Rashi notes, this gathering took place on the day after Yom Kippur. On the holy day of Yom Kippur, everyone is in awe of G-d, suffused with a sense of peace and brotherly love for his fellow man. Moses gathered the Jews together immediately afterward to teach them that Jewish unity should not be limited to Yom Kippur, but should be felt throughout the year. (Olelot Efraim)

This is the thing which the L-rd has commanded to say... whoever is of willing heart, let him bring an offering... gold and silver and bronze (Ex. 35:4-5)

In his Responsa, Rabbi Shlomo ben Aderet (the Rashba) writes that "it is a mitzva to publicize and make known those who do a mitzva." It is therefore incumbent upon us to "say" - announce publicly - the names of whoever donates money for "the thing, which the L-rd has commanded." (Pardes Yosef)

Moses called Betzalel and Oholiav, and every wise-hearted man (Ex. 36:2)

Why didn't the "wise-hearted men" come on their own to Moses, and waited until he approached each of them individually? Because a person who is truly wise-hearted doesn't consider himself wise; when Moses issued his call, none of them thought he was talking to them. (Ketoret Samim)

Of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the Sanctuary (Ex. 38:27)

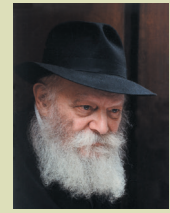
The Hebrew root of the word for socket, "eden," has two meanings: 1) a base or doorsill, and 2) lord and master. Both meanings, however, are interconnected. This is alluded to in Rabbi Meir's statement in the Zohar: "He who is small is great; he who is great is small." A person who is as humble as a "doorsill" is truly noble, while one who lords himself over others and feels superior is truly lowly. (Peninei HaTorah)



6:42 PM Candle Lighting Time
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24 Adar / March 13
Torah Portion Vayakhel-Pekudei
Parshat Hachodesh
Blessing of the new month of Nisan
Shabbat ends **7:42 PM**

L'Chaim

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"Our help is in the name of the L-rd, Who made heaven and earth" (Psalms 124:8)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

There are 39 categories of "work" prohibited on Shabbat, derived from the 39 different types of labor that were required to build the Sanctuary. As every Jew is enjoined to erect a "Sanctuary" to G-d in the spiritual sense, these laws reveal many important lessons for our Divine service.

As we read in the first of this week's two Torah portions, Vayakhel, setting a fire is one of these prohibited labors, as it states, "You shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the Sabbath day." The strict definition of "setting a fire" for which a Jew is culpable requires that some sort of benefit be derived from the act: either illumination, heat, or for the purpose of producing ashes. Without the element of benefit, it is not considered "setting a fire." (However, by Rabbinic decree it is forbidden to set any kind of fire or engage in related activities on Shabbat.)

In spiritual terms, this means that "fire," in and of itself, is not considered an actual component of our Divine service unless it produces practical benefit. To explain:

"Fire" refers to the innate flame within the Jewish soul, as it states, "The candle of G-d is the soul of man." A Jew is required to kindle and encourage this inner fire, until his whole being is suffused with longing to reunite with its G-dly Source.

In Judaism, however, spiritual elevation is not an end in itself. The objective is not to feel elevated and close to G-d, to the extent that the physical, mundane world becomes unimportant.

On the contrary, the Torah teaches that this is not a true "fire," for although it is pure it is devoid of purpose. In order to build a genuine "Sanctuary," a Jew's fiery love for G-d must result in actual consequences and actions.

This is reflected in the physical phenomenon of ashes. Ashes are symbolic of the most intense level of corporeality, which is why they remain after other matter is completely burned and consumed. Indeed, the whole purpose of a Jew's "fire," i.e., spiritual arousal, is to produce "ashes" - permeate the very lowest levels of existence with Torah and mitzvot.

The refinement of the physical plane through Torah and mitzvot is the underlying objective of the world's creation. When a Jew utilizes physical objects for the sake of Heaven he attains the most elevated of spiritual heights and fulfills G-d's will, according to the dictum "Action is the main thing."

The service of every individual Jew elevating his own corner of the world will in turn lead to the ultimate elevation of creation: the coming of Moshiach and the Final Redemption.

Adapted from Vol. 36 of Likutei Sichot

Why the Small Details Matter

You glance at the address you quickly scribbled on a piece of paper. Is that a l or a lowercase L? If you were mailing a letter, the postal service might still figure it out. But when you're sending an email, every character matters.

Details matter.

Imagine renovating your bathroom. After finally choosing tiles, you're faced with yet another decision: almond grout, buff, cream, or something else entirely. It may seem like a tiny detail, but that small choice can completely change how the room looks when it's finished.

Or think about sports. A runner from third base slides across home plate. Did he make it before the catcher tagged him? Sometimes the difference between safe and out comes down to a fraction of a second. That's why instant replay is used—to make the right call.

When we're younger, attention to detail can seem annoying. The teacher who insists we "dot every i and cross every t" feels overly picky. But as we grow older—and hopefully wiser—we begin to realize, details really do make a difference.

Jewish life is also full of details. People sometimes ask:

- Does G-d really care if food has reliable kosher supervision?
- Does it matter if Shabbat candles are lit exactly on time or a minute late?
- Is it important that a mezuzah

contains a handwritten parchment rather than a printed copy?

The Torah teaches us that the answer is yes. G-d truly does care.

G-d gave us mitzvot for a reason. If they were not important, they would not have been commanded. Along with those commandments came guidance about how to fulfill them properly. Over the centuries, we have been given resources to understand these details—the teachings of the Talmud, writings of great rabbis, and guidance of Rabbis who carefully study and apply these laws.

Details enhance many parts of life. They make clothing distinctive, transform a room from ordinary to beautiful, and add flavor to food. In the same way, the details of mitzvot bring meaning to everyday life. They can turn an ordinary home into a small sanctuary, elevate what we eat, and strengthen our relationship with G-d.

Consider the email example again. Every letter in the address must be correct for the message to arrive. One missing dot or one extra letter, and the message becomes undeliverable.

If we want our mitzvot—the "messages" we send upward—to reach their intended destination, we must fulfill them with care and attention to detail.

In the end, the details are not just small things. They ensure that our actions truly connect.

SLICE OF LIFE

As Iranian Missiles Fly Overhead, Purim Is Brought to Shelters

By Bruria Efuné / Chabad.org



Celebrating the Jewish holiday of Purim in Neve Shamir.

How does a Chabad emissary do Purim when sirens are sounding and public gatherings are banned? That was the question Rabbi Roei and Mushkie Uliel, and their colleagues across Israel, faced within hours of the first Iranian missile strikes on Shabbat morning. In a typical year, the Uliels fill a rented hall in Jerusalem's Abu Tor neighborhood for Megillah readings every hour, followed by a festive Purim meal that draws hundreds. What now?

Israel is under a state of emergency after Iranian missiles struck cities across the country in retaliation for a coordinated Israeli-U.S. military operation that has devastated Iran's leadership and military infrastructure. Sirens have sounded around the clock, schools and workplaces have been closed, and the IDF Home Front Command has prohibited public gatherings and educational activities as part of emergency directives meant to protect civilians.

The war started on the Shabbat before Purim, the holiday on which we celebrate the foiling of Haman the Amalekite's plot to destroy the Jewish people, and when the weekly Torah

reading is supplemented with the Zachor ("Remember!") reading (Deuteronomy 25:17-19) in which we are commanded to remember the evil of Amalek and to eradicate it from the face of the earth.

With large celebrations banned for safety reasons, communities around the country raced to ensure that the observances of the holiday, which begins on Monday evening, are not lost in the chaos.

The solution, worked out in conversations with fellow Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries across Jerusalem, was that if people could not safely gather in central locations, then the holiday festivities would be brought to them.

Instead of large gatherings, there would be dozens of smaller Megillah readings spread across communal bomb shelters, apartment buildings and safe rooms across the city. With Purim already underway in Israel, Megillah reading volunteers are going safely from shelter to shelter to ensure that every Jew who wants to hear the Megillah can do so safely. Mishloach manot are being delivered directly to homes where families are limiting their movement. The effort, coordinated across neighborhoods, has become a nationwide mobilization.

"While we typically make large celebrations, this effort of going to where the people are gathered, particularly in a time like this, is potentially even more far-reaching," says Mushky Uliel. "Now, our personal work is to practice everything we have learned about bitachon—trusting that G-d and every He plans for us is good. As the Tzemach Tzedek taught us: 'Think good, and it will be good.'"

FROM PLAN A TO PLAN B

Neve Shamir is a growing neighborhood with a strong English-speaking community in Beit Shemesh, near the Judean Mountains. Rabbi Danny and Esther Fordham moved to Israel to establish Chabad of Neve Shamir for English Speakers less than a year ago, and are now facing their first war experience in Israel.

Their original plan for Purim night was a large, family-friendly Megillah reading filled with children, crafts, prizes and mitzvah missions. For the first day after the war broke

out, they still hoped some version of it might be possible. But as the security situation became clearer and it was evident that public gatherings would not be allowed, they understood they would have to reorganize entirely. Within 24 hours, they shifted from planning one large communal event to coordinating multiple small readings in homes and safe spaces throughout the neighborhood.

"Plan A was a big communal event with over 100 people," Rabbi Fordham explained. "Plan B is literally going door to door, creating safe mini-readings throughout Neve Shamir in different home shelters, ensuring families can safely fulfill the mitzvah. We're preparing packages of crafts, Megillahs, graggers and crafts for each home."

Neve Shamir's English-speaking community is close-knit, with many young families eager to preserve a sense of normalcy and joy for their children despite the uncertainty. Recreating Purim in smaller, safer settings has become the focus—maintaining the costumes, the noise and the mitzvot, even without a central gathering.

"Parents are looking for ways to give their children a full Purim experience during uncertain times," Esther Fordham says. "Thank G-d, we're able to recreate that excitement in smaller, safer settings."

Ultimately, they organized Purim celebrations in 10 locations, ensuring that hundreds of men, women and children could celebrate the holiday.

Across the country, from Tel Aviv to Be'er Sheva, Eilat to Kiryat Shemona, that same approach has been adopted: Get Purim, and the four mitzvot of the day (hearing the Megilah, exchanging gifts of food, giving charity to the needy, and having a festive meal) everywhere where people are sheltering. Thousands of volunteers are already on their routes and schedules, ready to read the Megillah over and over again.

"Megillah every hour on the hour, in shelters across the city—that's the plan!" says Sara Naiditch, co-director of Chabad on the Coast in Tel Aviv. "We'll bring all the Purim mitzvot in one place and make sure that everyone can celebrate this special day properly and safely."

REBBETZIN'S BIRTHDAY (1901)

Rebbetzin Chaya Mushkah Schneerson (1901-1988), wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, was born on Shabbat, the 25th of Adar, in Babinovitch, a town near the Russian city of Lubavitch, in the year 5661 from creation (1901). In an address delivered on the 25 of Adar of 1988 (the Rebbetzin's 87th birthday, and about a month after her passing), the Rebbe initiated an international birthday campaign, urging people to celebrate their birthdays and utilize the day as a time of introspection and making resolutions involving an increase in good deeds.

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5737 [1977]

To All Participants In the Multiple Inauguration Under auspices of Beit Chabad

Rua Chabad 60, S. P. Brazil

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to be informed about the forthcoming Multiple Inauguration of the Synagogue, Mikve, Library and Rua Chabad in your community.

Each of these constructive achievements would have warranted celebration, particularly in the present unsettled times; how much more so all together.

The function of the synagogue is to serve as a two-way link between created beings and the Creator, whereby man rises upward to G-dliness through worship and prayer, and brings down G-d's blessings materially and spiritually.

The Mikve is the foundation of Jewish family life, ensuring purity and sanctity of the family structure and the continuity of future generations.

The Library, with its books of sacred literature and the wisdom of our Sages, is an inexhaustible source of wisdom and virtue to illuminate man's path in life. Indeed, to make such books freely available to readers has been described by our Sages as "an act of everlasting benevolence."

And Rua Chabad, symbolic of the "Chabad Way," is to develop the intellectual potential of the soul into a harmonious synthesis with the emotions of the heart in the service of G-d and fellow-man, with true love, joy and inspiration, always mindful of the guiding principle that "the essential thing is the deed."

Our Sages said that "an auspicious event is destined for an auspicious day."

It is significant that the said inauguration is taking place on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, the day which is historically associated with the inauguration of the sacred Tabernacle of

old, and the first day of the Month of Geulo - the liberation from bondage celebrated on Pesach, as well as of the future and final Redemption.

Great, indeed, is the merit of each and all who have a share in making the said inauguration a reality. May G-d bless each and all of you for your help in the past and even greater endeavor in the future, and bestow upon you and yours of His generous bounty, materially and spiritually.

With blessing,

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter of the 29th of Adar, and may G-d grant that you have good news to report on the matters about which you write in your letter.

As we are approaching the Season of Our Freedom, I trust that you will take time out to reflect on the significance of this great Festival, recalling the enslavement in Egypt, which was not only a physical enslavement but also a spiritual one. Yet, because of the great faith of the children of Israel in G-d, they were liberated from bondage, and received the Torah, thus giving them true and complete freedom. The simple message of it is that no Jew should ever give up hope, and should always strive to free himself from the influences and limitations of the environment, as well as from internal temptations, and make steady strides along the path of Torah and Mitzvot.

As for your personal problems, the best advice is that you should try to think as little as possible of your inner problems, until you completely dismiss them from your mind. This means not even thinking about their harmful aspects or how to overcome them, but completely disengaging your thoughts from those problems and engaging them in matters of Torah and Mitzvot. Another good method is to try to be among people as much as possible.

The statement which a boy of the Yeshiva... has made, as you write, is not true.

May the forthcoming Season of Our Freedom bring you true freedom from all distracting thoughts and from all temptations and diversions, both external and internal, so that you can serve G-d with the fullness and gladness of your heart,

Wishing you a kosher, happy and inspiring Pesach,

With blessing,

G-d has appointed it as a time of redemption. Every misfortune which befalls Israel during this month is nothing else but an assurance that the deliverance is about to begin."When G-d chose the Jewish people as His nation He established for them a month of redemption, a month in which the Jewish people would be redeemed from Egypt, a month in which they are destined to be redeemed in the future."

(Book of Our Heritage by Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In Memory of Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman, Director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization and Founder of the L'chaim Publication.

From the Archives

This Shabbat is Shabbat Mevarchim, the Shabbat before the new month. Literally translated, it means a Shabbat in which we bless the upcoming month. This Shabbat Mevarchim is special because it is the Shabbat before the month of Nisan, which is often referred to as "the month of Redemption."

On the surface, calling Nisan the month of Redemption is explained by the fact that Nisan is the month in which we celebrate Passover, the holiday which commemorates the Jews' redemption from Egyptian slavery. But the month of Nisan is also connected to the Final Redemption, as our Sages say, "In Nisan, our people were redeemed, and in Nisan, they will be redeemed in the future."

This Shabbat represents the transition from the month of Adar to the month of Nisan. Both months contain within them commemorations of miraculous events. In Adar we celebrate the downfall of Haman and the victory of the Jewish people, and in Nisan we celebrate our freedom from slavery. The difference between the events is that the miracles of Purim occurred within the natural order of the world, while the miracles of Passover transcended the natural order. The story of Purim can be traced through a natural sequence of events. But by cloaking miracles in the natural order of the world, we are actually elevating the natural order.

That is our true purpose on this earth, to elevate the physical to the spiritual and have G-dliness revealed on this plane.

Another concept that the two months have in common is redemption. Adar celebrates redemption from Haman's wicked decree, and Nisan celebrates the redemption from Egypt. Shabbat is also a kind of redemption, a weekly redemption from mundane cares and worries to a place of light, joy, song and Torah-study. May all of these redemptions be stepping-stones to our complete, final, and ultimate Redemption, the coming of Moshiach.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה י מושקא

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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