



Many years ago, in the time when the Holy Temple stood, there lived in Jerusalem two storekeepers named Rabbi Elazar ben Tzadok and Abba Shaul ben Botnit.

The two men were neighbors and friends and had known each other most of their lives. But in addition to being friends, they shared a wonderful and rare character trait - absolute and strict honesty.

It is related in the Talmud that as a favor to their fellow Jews, these two men would prepare stores of wine and oil before every holiday so that the people of Jerusalem would have what they needed to celebrate the holidays properly.

Tens of thousands of Jews would stream into Jerusalem for the holidays and would be welcomed into homes throughout the city. With so many guests, it was no wonder that their gracious hosts would sometimes run out of oil or wine during a festival.

Whenever that happened, they could go to Rabbi Elazar or Abba Shaul and take what they needed. Of course, no money would pass hands on a festival, but there would be no lack of those two necessities to prepare for the festive meals.

Even during the intermediate days of the pilgrimage festivals of Sukkot and Passover, the two generous merchants would prepare in advance and make their goods available to those in need so that they could spend their time studying Torah.

Not only did they practice these deeds of great kindness, but even on regular work days they were outstanding in their adherence to the mitzva (commandment) of honesty. When they would finish pouring the contents of one of their containers into a customer's container, they would sit their container on top of that of the customer and allow the dregs of the jug to drip into the customer's receptacle. Only then were they sure that they had given the customer everything that was due him.

Despite their stringencies, the two rabbis feared that a bit of oil and wine would still cling to the edges of the jugs. So what did they do? Each man had a special container into which he would pour the last tiny drops. Over many years, they accumulated three hundred barrels of oil and three hundred barrels of wine.

One day, they decided to bring all of these barrels to the Holy Temple. After all, they did not consider it their property, yet they could not give it to the customers either. They decided to consecrate it to the Holy Temple. When the porters arrived, they were met by the treasurers of the Temple.

"What have you brought?" they asked.

"We have brought three hundred barrels of wine and three hundred barrels of oil for use in the Holy Temple. It has taken us many years to accumulate it, allowing it to drip from the sides of our jugs. We did not want to benefit from anything which does not belong to us, and we couldn't give it to our customers."

"It was certainly not necessary to collect those small leftovers," remarked the treasurers. "Your customers understand that tiny drops adhere to the sides of your jugs, and they expect there to be some waste."

"Nevertheless," the men continued, "We don't want anything that is not rightfully ours."

"Since you wish to keep such a high standard, we will accept your offering. The oil and wine will be used for the good of the community. We will sell them and from the profits we will dig wells for the pilgrims to have water on the festivals. The residents of the city will also be able to use them. So you see, even your own customers will benefit from your offering, and your own minds can be at ease."

The two merchants left the precincts of the Holy Temple with hearts full of joy, knowing that they never departed from their customs of strict honesty and kindness.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

Pure olive oil, pressed for the light (Exod. 27:20)

The first drop of oil pressed from an olive is the finest, and that was the oil used to light the menorah in the Holy Temple. The remaining oil in the olive was used for meal offerings. This is the reverse of what is normally done.

Usually, one would use the best oil for cooking and the cheaper oil for lighting. The menorah is a symbol of spirituality. It represents Torah and mitzvot. Unfortunately there are some who might plead poverty when they have to spend money for Torah or mitzvot, but spend lavishly on personal pleasures. We learn from this that for Torah and mitzvot one should spend money for the best and the purest, and for personal pleasure a Jew should practice restraint and learn to suffice with less. (*Klei Yakar*)

And you shall command the Children of Israel (Exod. 27:20):

The name of Moshe is not mentioned in this Torah portion because Moshe died on the seventh day of the month of Adar, which usually falls during the week that this Torah portion is read. (*Me'or Einayim*)

Olive oil, pounded, for the lighting (Ex. 27:20)

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad, once said: "He who wants to reach the 'lighting,' the enlightenment to be found in the Torah, should work on himself by 'pounding' away at his ego and nullifying his sense of self. How? By always bearing in mind that the Torah he learns is none other than the wisdom and the will of G-d. That is the meaning of our supplication, 'Open my heart to Your Torah.'"



5:22 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area

14 Adar I / Feb 23 / Purim Katan

Torah Portion Tetzaveh

Shabbat is Shushan Purim Katan

Shabbat ends 6:22 PM

L'Chaim

בס"ד
1812

14 Adar I, 5784

February 23, 2024

The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person

נוסד תור ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson

"May there be peace in your wall, tranquility in your palaces" (Psalm 122:6)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

This week's Torah reading, Tetzave, is the only portion in the entire Torah following Moses' birth, in which Moses' name does not appear.

Our Sages explain that the reason for this was Moses' own request after the Children of Israel sinned with the Golden Calf: "And if not (if You will not forgive them), blot me out, I pray you, from Your book which You have written." The words of a tzadik, a righteous person, are always fulfilled, even if spoken conditionally. Thus, Moses' wish was granted, for his name never appears in the entire portion.

However, we find an interesting phenomenon: This chapter begins with a direct address to the very person whose name it omits! "And you shall command (ve'ata tetzave)."

A name is a means of identification and a way of being known to others. But one does not really need a name in order to live. A newborn baby exists as an independent being from the moment it is born, and only receives its name after several days. From this we learn that the use of the grammatical second person, "you," expresses an even higher level of relationship than calling a person by his given name, which was only bestowed on him secondarily. If such is the case, then it follows that the omission of Moses' name only serves to underscore the very special essence of Moses, which was even higher than the mention of his name could express.

Moses' whole life was Torah, to the extent that we refer to the Torah as "The Five Books of Moses." Yet, when the lowest elements among the Children of Israel sinned with the Golden Calf, explicitly expressing their desire to separate themselves from the Torah, Moses was willing to sacrifice that which he held most dear on their behalf. "Blot out my name from Your book," Moses pleaded with G-d, if You will not forgive them even this grave sin.

The commentator Rashi explains; "Moses is Israel, and Israel is Moses." When even some Jews sinned, Moses suffered a spiritual blow. Even though Moses was up on Mount Sinai when the Golden Calf was made, he was still affected by the actions of the others.

It was Moses' self-sacrifice and his desire to forgo that which was most important to him that express a unity that is beyond mere names. It is therefore precisely the portion Tetzave, in which Moses is not mentioned, that reveals his strength and his greatness. The willingness to sacrifice oneself for every fellow Jew, even one who sins, is the mark of every true leader of the Jewish People.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Purim Katan: A Not So Minor Holiday

By Rabbi Eli Friedman

The current Jewish year 5784 is a leap year. That means two things:

Firstly, there is a thirteenth month this year. The month of Adar - which features the festival of Purim - is repeated, giving us Adar I and Adar II, with Purim on the 14th day of Adar II.

Secondly, thirty days before Purim, on the 14th day of Adar I, we have an extra festival called "Purim Katan", which some might translate as "The Minor Purim."

But while the name may imply a "minor" festival, a clever person will not be fooled into letting Purim Katan pass by unnoticed. Sure, a cynic may sniff that Purim Katan is no more than a courtesy nod at the date that would have been Purim had it not been a leap year. But cynicism is certainly not clever.

If the Divinely orchestrated Jewish tradition gave us a special day - a "special guest" who only visits once every few years - we would do well to investigate and utilize its unique quality.

And what is its unique quality?

It puts us in a Purim mindset a month earlier than usual. Can that be called minor? Can thirty extra days of happy energy be a minor matter? For people fighting every day to find happiness, can the appearance of thirty happy days be dismissed as a minor event?

Purim reminds us of everything

we love, hope, and pray for. The themes of Purim are priceless: miracles are about to happen; despair can turn to delight literally overnight; evil will always buckle under the weight of its own arrogance; every one of us has a crucial role to play in the destiny of our nation and our world; and of course, our respect for each other triggers G-d's most sublime kindness to all of us.

Thirty days to immerse in the exquisite energies of miracles, hope, justice, purpose, and unity - hardly minor.

Small, perhaps. But small is not minor. The Hope Diamond is the size of a walnut. Microchips are even smaller. Atoms are microscopic. None of them are minor.

Purim Katan is small, but it is certainly not minor.

Because, like Yom Kippur, Purim is a holy blur of a day. A single day - gone in a flash. Blink, and it's gone.

What a marvelous gift to be given thirty days of build-up to Purim. An extra month to study, reflect and internalize Purim's messages. An extra month to nurture the kind of genuine, inner joy that Purim deserves. And an extra month to spread the word, ensuring that Purim isn't missed by any Jewish man, woman, or child in one's sphere of influence.

Yes, Purim Katan may be small. But don't let it fool you; Purim Katan can change your life.

SLICE OF LIFE

Merging Torah and Science
With Dr. Binyomin Abrams, PhD.



Traffic is terrible in Boston, and so is the price of gas. Therefore, not long after moving there, Professor Binyomin Abrams ditched his car and bought himself a Moped.

That summer, as he was riding his moped down Commonwealth Avenue - a large street that runs the length of Boston University Campus - one of the incoming first year students snapped a photo of him with his beard flying in the wind. The student posted it on Facebook and captioned it, ‘So excited to be coming to Boston University. Where else are you going to see an Amish person riding a moped?!’ Then the comments started coming in.

The first comment was, ‘I don’t think the Amish are allowed to ride Mopeds.’ Then the second one was, ‘Hey, stop telling the Amish what they are and aren’t allowed to do.’ And then the last comment was, ‘I don’t think he’s Amish. I think that’s a Hasidic Jewish person, and I think he’s our chemistry professor.’

Binyomin Abrams grew up in Montreal. He and his family belonged to an Orthodox synagogue, but they weren’t particularly observant. Abrams attended years of Jewish day school and had a bar mitzvah, but not much else.

He was always fascinated by chemistry, and in 1998, he went to the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he earned a bachelor’s and master’s degree in chemistry. In 2003, he moved to Manhattan to get his PhD in theoretical chemistry.

His first encounter with Chabad was at a Passover Seder while living in Manhattan. Abrams was looking for somewhere to celebrate the holiday, and ended up attending a Seder led by Rabbi Korn at Chabad on the Bowery. He was extremely taken by the experience, and by Judaism in general. He began laying Tefillin and joining Chabad every week for Shabbat almost immediately.

That summer, in the middle of his PhD studies, Abrams took off and attended a two-week Yeshiva summer program. From there, he continued studying Judaism in Crown Heights and he became fully Torah observant. His doctoral studies went on, but he split his time between his studies at NYU and learning Torah and Chassidus. During that time, Abrams was introduced to and married his wife, Liorah.

He was encouraged by the words of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to continue in chemistry after his degree, and was drawn to working as an educator. Abrams also began to study and research the connection between Torah with science, and was fascinated by how the two merged.

In 2008, Abrams earned his Ph.D. in theoretical chemistry, and was hired by Boston University as a professor and lecturer. However, because he’s a Canadian citizen, there were a few visa issues to work out at the last second. This meant that the BU course list hadn’t been updated to reflect that he was teaching classes. Therefore, Abrams was listed on the student’s rosters as ‘professor staff’ (which is what they write when they don’t know who is going to teach a class). As a result, the students had no idea who would be teaching.

Abrams walked into his first lecture of the year. It was a class of about 180 1st year students taking advanced chemistry. Most of them were pre-health students, chemistry majors, or biochemistry majors. He walked in wearing Tzitzis, a hat, a jacket, and a beard.

Looking up at the students with a trace of a smile on his face, Abrams said, “Welcome to Intro. to Mystical Jewish Thought.” And the room went silent. It was their first class, so a student timidly pointed out that, “Professor, I think you’re in the wrong room.” Abrams asked what class this was, and the students clarified that it was chemistry. “Oh, ok, I can teach you that too,”

replied Abrams.

Despite this humorous first encounter, Abrams teaches strictly chemistry in the classroom. However, students can, and often do, learn Torah with Professor Abrams in his office.

In 2015, Abrams received a prestigious award for excellence in teaching. In front of an audience of 5000 people, he was up on the big screen, wearing the ceremonial gown under his black beard, and his black hat on top.

There were easily 50 other professors there, all wearing their full college regalia, but he was up on stage in his gown and Chassidic garb: Professor Abrams refuses to compromise.

Abrams’s mind, heart, and whole self is in Judaism now.

There is an old saying: the first sip from the Chalice of Science could make someone an atheist. But if you drink all the way to the bottom, G-d is waiting. Abrams made his way to the bottom.

Two years ago, Abrams studied for and earned rabbinic ordination. Now Rabbi, Doctor, Professor, Binyomin Abrams in his 16th academic year teaching at Boston University.

Over the years, Professor Abrams has enjoyed a friendship with Rabbi Shmuel Posner, Chabad Emissary to Boston, who continues to serve the Jewish students at BU, always looking to help and inspire, and with Rabbi Korn who continues to direct and inspire at the Chabad House on the Bowery, together with his wife Sara.

Abrams says that without them, he wouldn’t be where he is now.

For those who wish to catch a glimpse of chemistry professor Binyomin Abrams on his moped, weaving through Commonwealth Ave’s thicket of pedestrians, skateboarders, bicyclists, buses and automobiles: unfortunately, those days are over... Abrams switched from a moped to a bicycle.

As he says, 100 miles a gallon is good, but a bicycle is better for your health and even better with gas mileage. So students up and down Commonwealth Ave will still be able to witness his beard flapping in the breeze.

Excerpt from the Machne Israel “Lamplighters” Podcast - for more episodes visit Lubavitch.com/podcast

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

TWO ADARS, DOUBLY AUSPICIOUS

By the Grace of G-d

1st Day of Rosh Chodesh Adar 1, 5746
[February 10, 1986]

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

I duly received your letter of the 21st of Shevat, with enclosure. As requested, I will remember you in prayer for the fulfillment of your heart’s desires for good in the matter about which you wrote.

You should have complete confidence in the assurance of Torah that no one gets hurt by doing a Mitzvah, especially doing it beyond the call of duty.

Moreover, we are getting into the auspicious month of Adar, which is doubly auspicious this year, being a Leap Year, with two months of Adar. It is particularly auspicious for Jews in connection with matters of Yiddishkeit. May it be so with you and yours, and may you have good news to report.

With blessing,

P.S. Enclosed is a copy of my message to the recent Convention of Neshei u’Bnos Chabad, and it is meant not only for the women, but also for the men.

A PURIM LESSON ON JEWISH IDENTITY

By the Grace of G-d

19 Adar Sheni, 5711 [March 27, 1951]

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

Persia, in the days of Ahasuerus, was the mightiest empire in the world. It also boasted of the most advanced civilization of those days. On the other hand, the Jewish people at that time were in despair. The Holy Land and the Beth Hamikdosh lay in ruins. The opinion was widely circulated that

G-d had abandoned His people. This was supported by miscalculations purporting to show that the period of seventy years’ exile prophesied by our prophets was at an end, yet the promised liberation had not come. This, in fact, was one of the reasons why Ahasuerus made that pompous feast and dared to profane the holy vessels.

Under the circumstances, when the head of the mightiest world empire and civilization arranged the royal feast, inviting to it representatives of all nations, the Jews among them, many Jews could not resist the temptation. They were not deterred by the fact that this banquet was to mark the beginning of a new “era” of complete assimilation and were deluded by the friendly slogan of “no compulsion.” Thus, they became a party to the profanation of the holy vessels.

Symbolically, the profanation of the holy vessels of the Beth Hamikdosh, marked also the desecration of the Divine soul which forms the sanctuary of every Jew and Jewess. The purpose and mission of this Divine spark is to light up one’s immediate environment and one’s share in the world at large with the light of the highest Divine ideals. Far from fulfilling their soul’s mission upon this earth, those weak Jews lent aid and comfort to the forces of assimilation and darkness. By partaking from the “food” of Ahasuerus they contaminated both their bodies and souls.

Purim, therefore, reminds us not to be carried away by the outer sparkle of foreign civilizations or cultures, and not to be misled into assimilation by the notion that it appears to be in no conflict with our spiritual heritage.

We are unique people, as started in the Megillah: “There is one people (although) scattered and spread among the peoples of the world, (yet) their laws are different from those of other peoples.” We have preserved our unity and uniqueness despite our being dispersed in the world, because we have preserved our laws. It is by preserving our Torah and Mitzvot that we Jews in general, and our youth in particular, can best contribute towards the enlightenment of the world at large and bring real happiness to ourselves, our people, and humanity as a whole.

(Excerpt from letter)

(Peninei HaGeula)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Being that this year is a leap year, containing two months of Adar, the 14th day of the first Adar (this year: Friday, February 23) is known as Purim Kattan, the ‘small’ Purim.

Until our present fixed calendar was established, the Sanhedrin (highest rabbinical court) would decide whether the year would be a leap year. They very often postponed this decision until the last minute to see if the plants had begun to sprout and there was enough time for it to grow in order to bring the Omer, as well as if the roads were dry enough for those who were travelling to Jerusalem for Passover would otherwise be unable to arrive in time for the holiday, etc. After Moshiach comes, the Sanhedrin will again decide each year whether to add a second Adar.

Likewise, there is also a Shushan Purim Kattan, a ‘small’ Shushan Purim, on the 15th day of the first Adar. The Jews of Shushan, the capital city of Persia, fought their enemies on the 13th and 14th of Adar and celebrated on the 15th, unlike the Jews who dwelled in other regions of the Babylonian Empire, who fought only on the 13th and celebrated on the 14th. In a talk about Purim, The Rebbe explained the relevance of a Jewish holiday named for a city in the Diaspora. It is the task of every Jew to refine the material environment of the world, to transform the mundane into the holy. By naming the holiday Shushan Purim, we are transforming the Persian capital into something positive.

The lesson of Shushan Purim can be applied to the rest of the year. This task that we have been given, to elevate the physical into the spiritual realm, is a daily, hourly, constant assignment. Money, the truest symbol of materialism, is simply currency. But when money is given to charity, then it has been elevated to something holy.

Eating, a purely physical act, can be transformed into a spiritual act when one looks upon the act of consuming food as a means of refueling in order to have the energy to perform mitzvot.

We must continue with the task of elevating the physical to the spiritual until the ultimate fulfillment of that goal, the arrival 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.



Published by
Lubavitch Youth Organization
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Colel Chabad’s Free Pop-Up Shop Keeps War-Weary Ashdod Residents Warm



In war-weary Ashdod, Israel, a free pop-up shop was open to needy residents

As Israel experienced its first real downpour of the year, war-weary Ashdod residents, where many residents remain traumatized by the onslaught of rocket attacks, were grateful to have secured a bundle of winter clothes

to keep warm and dry. Hundreds of new items were made available when Colel Chabad, the oldest continuous charity in the Holy Land, hosted a free pop-up store to help those in need.

In Southern Israel alone, Colel Chabad fed 50,000 households before the war and in the immediate aftermath was able to deliver 18,000 meals a day to residents of Ofakim, Sderot, Netivot, Ashkelon and Beersheva, where many grocery stores were closed or empty.

Pivoting to emergency mode is par for the course of the charity, which was founded by the first Chabad Rebbe—Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, known as the Alter Rebbe—in 1788. In our generation, under the stewardship of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Colel Chabad has become one of the Jewish world’s most recognized charities.

Who’s Who

The great prophet Elijah (Elijah) lived approximately in the Jewish year 3,000 (760 b.c.e.) and lived at a time when the Jews were greatly tempted by idol worship. He pitted himself against 450 priests of the Baal cult on Mount Carmel when he successfully demonstrated the veracity of G-d.

Taken by a fiery chariot, he was one of the seven saints who went into the next world alive. Tradition names Elijah as the one who will announce the advent of Moshiah.

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Egyptian exile, with its backbreaking labor, was the crucible of fire that refined the Jewish people, transforming them into a proper vessel to contain the illumination

of the revelation of Torah on Mount Sinai. So it is with our present exile as well, when we find ourselves “pounded” by the harshness of the exile. But it is precisely this “pounding” that will bring us to the “light” of Moshiah and the Messianic Era, as our Sages commented, “It is only when the olive is crushed that the oil can emerge.”