



Over 600 years ago, an uprising was started by an ignorant French shepherd boy in Southern France, who set the minds of the simple folk afire with tales of a revelation.

"Every day a dove appears before me. Sometimes, it perches on my shoulder and sometimes upon my head, and whispers prophecies in my ears. When I extend my hand to take the dove, it turns into a lovely maiden and says to me, "Some day you will be a king. But now, you must wage war against Turkey, and you will be victorious."

The words of the shepherd boy had an overwhelming effect. The story spread like wildfire, and the credulous masses flocked by the thousands to see and hear the shepherd boy. Most of the people, their curiosity satisfied, returned to their homes, but hordes of shepherds remained and formed a huge army. This group, which numbered thirty thousand, travelled with the shepherd boy from place to place as he spread his message.

The shepherds had marched to Granada, whence they would continue on to Turkey, when they realized the folly of their expedition. How could they attack the mighty forces of Turkey with their few sticks and clubs? No, they thought, let us attack the Jews instead, for they would be easy prey, and were, after all, infidels, no different from the Turks! They would seize the spoils, buy weapons, and then, equipped for battle, would proceed against Turkey.

Wherever the shepherds travelled the Jews suffered terribly. Messengers were dispatched to the king of France begging for protection against the violent mobs. Afraid of the uprising gaining force and spreading, the king ordered each city to assist the Jews in warding off the marauders. He also ordered the shepherds to disband, but they scoffed at his dispatches.

Jews were massacred in Marseilles, and the shepherds moved on to Toulouse. The governor there moved with great force against them and many were imprisoned. But, during the night their supporters amongst the populace freed them. The following morning, word spread that the "guardian angel" of the shepherds had set them free, and the masses rallied to save them from the governor. So strong was the public support for the mob that the governor feared to oppose them.

Meanwhile, the Jewish population had fled to the tower of Narbonne to escape the bloodthirsty mob. When rumor of the capture of the shepherds reached the Jews, they joyously left the protection of the fortress, sure that the governor had saved them. The shepherd force fell upon the unprotected Jews, and together with local accomplices, scores of Jews were murdered.

The governor was enraged by news of this latest massacre. He, himself set out to crush the shepherd mob, but when he saw the support they had attracted, he had no choice but to retreat in the face of overwhelming odds. The governor had great sympathy for the beleaguered Jews. He sent horsemen to warn them to stay in hiding until the danger had passed. Then, he had them escorted to the city of Carcassonne, which lay locked behind great walls.

When the shepherds heard of the governor's plans, they bribed the escort to inform them of the path which the Jews would take. The hapless Jews were slaughtered by the shepherds who ambushed them on the road.

The shepherds got as far as Aragon and Navarre in Spain, where they met firm opposition from Alphonso, King of Aragon. He captured 80 shepherds and hanged them. When the shepherds reached the city of Montreal, the Jews had been warned and came out to meet them in battle, killing many of them.

One day Alphonso proposed to his strongest warrior, "If you will kill their leader, I will give you a great reward."

"But how could I kill such a holy person?" the soldier asked.

The king replied, "If he falls to your hand, it is a sign that he is no more than a wandering murderer, and you will have performed a meritorious deed."

The soldier set out for the shepherd camp. At first shot the shepherd leader fell. When they saw their leader dead, the others fled from the camp. The shepherd army split into many small bands and returned to their homes. Only one group of about five hundred, unaware of the death of their leader, went to attack the city of Toledo. When they reached the city, Alphonso's brave warriors met them with arms and drove them out of the city.

When generals and kings heard of the defeat of the shepherd army, they set their armies against the remaining bands and destroyed many. Others perished in a plague which followed the numerous battles.

By the year 1320 the uprisings of the shepherds were crushed completely. The Jews of Germany, France, and Spain then gathered food and clothing to help rehabilitate the many destroyed and ravaged Jewish communities in Southern France and Northern Spain.

L'Chaim

The Weekly Publication for Every Jewish Person

נוסד תור נמי השלושים
Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"Jerusalem has mountains around it, and the L-rd is around His people from now and to eternity" (Psalms 125:2)

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

And the priest...shall make atonement for him, because he sinned against the soul (Num. 6:11)

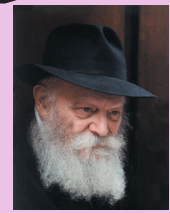
The Talmud relates the question of Rabbi Elazar HaKapar: "Which soul has the Nazarite sinned against?" The answer is, his own soul. (A Nazarite is one who takes a vow to abstain from wine, during which time he is also not allowed to cut his hair or come into contact with the dead.) If the Nazarite's only "sin" is having denied himself wine, how much more so is it "sinful" to deliberately cause oneself any kind of distress or suffering? Indeed, our Sages said: One who sits and fasts is called a sinner. (Nedarim 10a)

Four of the wagons and eight of the oxen he gave to the sons of Merari (Num. 7:8)

These wagons had to carry an enormously heavy load of materials for the Sanctuary: huge planks, bolts, pillars, tent pegs, etc. Why, then, were there only four wagons? Why wasn't the weight distributed on several more? The answer is that if everything could be loaded onto four wagons, no more were required. Every single object in the world must be used to its full potential, as "G-d has created nothing superfluous in His world." (The Rebbe)

The one who made his offering on the first day was Nachshon, the son of Aminadav, of the tribe of Judah (Num. 7:12)

All of the other Nesi'im (princes) who made offerings are referred to by their proper title, Nasi, whereas Nachshon is referred to only by name. The reason? To "counteract" his having been first, lest he become boastful. (Chizkuni) The numerical equivalent of the Hebrew letters of "on the first day" ("bayom harishon") is 620 - the same as "keter" ("crown"). This is an allusion to the sovereignty granted by G-d to the tribe of Judah. (Ohr HaTorah)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

"And every offering of all the holy things...which they bring to the kohen, shall be his," states the Torah in this week's portion, Naso.

"This refers to bikurim (first fruits)," explains Rashi, the great Torah commentator.

The very first fruits to ripen are to be brought to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and given to the kohen (priest), as his due.

Agricultural produce does not grow by itself.

In order to produce those fruits a Jew must toil countless hours painstakingly plowing, sowing and tending his fields. Yet instead of enjoying for himself the first tangible results of his labor, the Torah demands that they be brought to Jerusalem and presented to a total stranger!

We learn from this that the very first and best of whatever a person possesses should be used for the purpose of tzedaka (charity).

Many people don't find it too difficult to accept this principle when it comes to supporting religious institutions.

They give willingly when asked to contribute to a synagogue or yeshiva.

But a strange thing occurs when it comes to giving tzedaka to a needy individual: "Why should I part with my hard-earned money to support him?" the Evil Inclination prompts us.

"Why should his needs come before mine? Why must I part with the very best? Is not second best good enough? Better I should take care of myself first, and only afterward help others with whatever is left over."

We learn, however, from the mitzva of bikurim, that such is not the Jewish way.

We are commanded to give the first fruits to the kohen, an individual, for his own personal use. Only after this is done are we permitted to derive benefit from the blessings G-d has given us.

Significantly, the Torah commands us to bring the first fruits to the Holy Temple, "the house of the L-rd your G-d" in Jerusalem before presenting them to the kohen.

A Jew must first understand that whatever wealth is granted him from Above is not truly his, despite the labor he may have invested to amass it.

When a Jew realizes that everything, in reality, belongs to G-d, the protests of the Evil Inclination are silenced, and it is far easier to part with the "first fruits" of one's earnings even for another individual.

Naso: To be Lifted

By Rabbi Lazar Gurkow

To celebrate the inauguration of the tabernacle, the Jewish tribal princes made several key contributions, including the four wagons and eight oxen to transport the sacred vessels across the desert.

Moses distributed the oxen and wagons to the Levitic families responsible for the transportation. However, Moses did not allocate a wagon to the Kehati family although they had the most sacred responsibility of all: to carry the Holy Ark.

The Torah tells us this was because the work of carrying the most sacred objects should not be assigned to oxen. It should be carried on their own shoulders.

MY MITZVAH

When Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Bardichev was a child, he heard that two illustrious visitors would lodge overnight at his parents' home. He hastened to prepare a bedroom for the visitors. His father asked him why he didn't instruct the hired help to prepare the room. The child replied, "G-d gave me a chance to perform a mitzvah, why should I give it away to another?"

When you have the privilege of carrying the Holy Ark, you don't hand the mitzvah away. You carry it yourself. What of the strain? If you feel the privilege of the mitzvah, it won't be a burden.

TO BE LIFTED

The actual words used by the Torah are "with their shoulders they shall lift it." The Torah wanted us to realize that the Holy Ark was a

vessel that required heavy lifting. But the Hebrew word, yisa'u, they shall lift, can also be understood as they shall be lifted. Because the Levites who lifted the ark, were themselves lifted by it.

Our sages taught that although the Levites carried the ark, the ark traveled of its own accord. The Levites simply held on and were carried along. On the surface it appeared as if the Levites were the guardians of the ark. In truth, the ark guarded its guardians.

When we dig deep to do G-d's bidding even when it is inconvenient and costly, we feel a sense of exaltedness and achievement that can't be derived from anything else. We dig deep to lift the mitzvah, but in turn, it lifts us up.

TEACHERS

Those Levites who carried the Holy Ark were the prime teachers of the Jewish people.

When Moses was given eight oxen and four wagons to distribute, he decided that he could not hand these to the primary Levitic teachers. The holy task was incumbent on them, thus they needed to lift with their shoulders.

If we want to inspire our children to be passionate and faithful Jews, we must be willing to do it right. It is not enough to practice bare-bones Judaism. If we dig deep and do the right thing, even when it is challenging and difficult, our children will learn from our example.



8:00 PM Candle Lighting Time

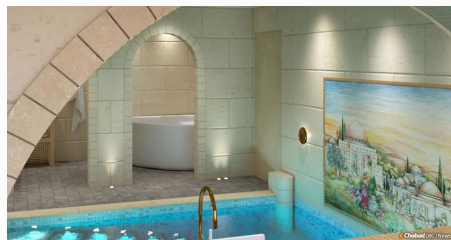
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SLICE OF LIFE

Designer for IKEA's Latest Project Is a Mikvah in Sweden



The new mikvah in Gothenburg was designed by Olga Popyrina, a long time designer for IKEA, who worked closely with Rabbi Alexander and Leah Namdar to realize their vision.

You might not necessarily know her name, but this designer's work is a staple in millions of homes around the world.

Olga Popyrina spent decades creating lighting fixtures and glassware for home furnishings giant IKEA, founded and headquartered in Sweden, and established her own company as a freelance designer in Sweden, Popyrina Design. She's designed spaces for a high-end restaurant in Tokyo, hotels and private properties in Moscow, malls and homes in New York, private properties in London, and a private property for LASVIT Moscow.

Her connection to Gothenburg's Jewish community, though, predates any of that.

Popyrina arrived in Sweden from Russia in the early 1990s, the daughter of Russian diplomats from the Soviet era, drawn to the country by her passion for design and architecture.

She was soon drawn as well to Rabbi Alexander and Leah Namdar, who had just established Chabad-Lubavitch Sweden in the city, and enrolled her son, Ivan, in their fledgling preschool. She chose a Hebrew name around that time: Ora, Hebrew for "light." It suited her.

She even approached the Namdars with an idea to create a custom lamp for the Chabad center. Bearing the verse, "And G-d said, 'Let there be

light,' and there was light," the lamp still stands there today.

Now, more than 30 years later, Popyrina is once again combining her artistic sensibilities and Jewish expression, designing a mikvah that carries decades of history and a unique connection to the Rebbes of Chabad.

A WISH OF THE REBBE

On March 7, 1940, the Sixth Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, of righteous memory, had just narrowly escaped Nazi-occupied Europe via a journey that took him from Warsaw to Berlin to Riga, Latvia, then on to Stockholm. The ship that would bring him to the United States left from Gothenburg, Sweden. In a letter to a Chassid, the Sixth Rebbe expressed his wish that a mikvah be built in that city.

For nearly 50 years, a mikvah in Gothenburg remained an unrealized dream.

In 1988, the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory, directed Rabbi Avraham Glick—a Chabad Chassid in London with business connections in Scandinavia—to ensure a mikvah was built in Gothenburg. Glick took to the task, and oversaw the construction of a mikvah in the basement of a building on Storgatan Street.

The following year, Rabbi Alexander and Leah Namdar were married, intending to heed the Rebbe's call to serve as emissaries to bring Judaism to every Jew in the world. The Rebbe sent them to Gothenberg.

The young couple arrived in 1991 to find the mikvah largely unused. They spent the next years encouraging the community to learn more about the mitzvah of mikvah and teaching about Family Purity. When the Jewish community eventually decided to sell the Storgatan building, the Namdars decided to build a new mikvah inside their own Chabad center.

In 2011, with funding from Mikvah.org and the Mayim Chaim Fund, they converted a small indoor Scandinavian-style pool into a halachically certified space. In the years since, it has served locals, tourists and brides.

OUR RENOVATION CONTINUES THAT VISION

In 1975, the Rebbe launched his mitzvah campaign focusing on Family Purity. At that time, mikvah observance was rarely discussed in public, and many Jewish families were unfamiliar with this foundational mitzvah.

By placing it alongside core mitzvot like Shabbat and kosher, the Rebbe emphasized that Family Purity was not a marginal practice but a foundational pillar of Jewish life. He urged communities to immediately build mikvahs and beautify existing ones, insisting they be clean, attractive, even luxurious spaces that Jewish women would feel comfortable and proud using.

By 2025, the Namdars felt it was time to elevate Gothenburg's mikvah space. When they considered who might lead the redesign, Popyrina was the obvious choice.

The Namdars and Popyrina have been working together to meet the highest standards on both the halachic and aesthetic fronts. So far, the pool, shower and jacuzzi rooms have already been constructed, while permits for the entrance and arch will be ready soon. Throughout the majority of this project, with the exception of only a few days, the mikvah has remained open and available for the community's continuous use.

"In designing this mikvah, I wanted to create an atmosphere where light, water and the warmth of bronze tones come together in harmony, a space that feels timeless, peaceful and deeply alive. Water symbolizes renewal and purity, while the soft reflection of light on natural materials creates a feeling of calm and inner connection," Popyrina shares. "This project carries history, faith and renewal, and I feel privileged to express these spiritual ideas through design."

This mikvah has a unique feature: The sink that will be in the lobby was used regularly by the Rebbe for over 40 years. It previously was housed outside the Rebbe's room at Chabad World Headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, N.Y., and was given to Rabbi Namdar when he and his family assisted in replacing it with a new one.

"When you enter the mikvah you immediately feel the holiness," adds community member Sara Lejderman. "In Gothenburg, we used to have a kosher but small mikvah, in a shoddy basement. Now, we finally have a mikvah befitting of queens. As a mikvah user of many years, this mikvah is a true blessing."

"It brings me so much joy to see the vision of two of our great Rebbes come to fruition in this way," Namdar concludes. "We hope that this will help increase the observance of this mitzvah and bring more Jewish life to our city."

To support the renovation of the mikvah in Gothenburg, visit charidy.com/mikvesweden



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

DIVINE AUTHORITY

From letters of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

15 Cheshvan, 5733

This is to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence.

You write that you would love to learn what it means to walk in the presence of G-d, etc. I trust that you know of the so-called Seven Commandments given by G-d to Noah and his children.

These are:

1. the establishment of courts of justice;
2. the prohibition of blasphemy;
3. of idolatry;
4. of incest;
5. of bloodshed;
6. of robbery;
7. of eating flesh cut from a living animal.

These Seven Commandments which G-d gave to the children of Noah, i.e. to all mankind, are the basic laws, with far-reaching ramifications, which embrace the whole life of society as well as of the individual, to ensure that the human race will be guided by these Divine laws of morality and ethics, and that human society will indeed be human, and not a jungle.

To be sure, Jews, the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were later given many more Divine commandments which obligate them, but not the rest of mankind.

However, this in no way diminishes the fact that gentiles can and must attain complete fulfillment through the observance of the above-mentioned Seven Commandments of man, with all their ramifications, for, inasmuch as they are G-d-given, they provide the vehicle whereby to attain communion with G-d, and thus "walk ever in the presence of G-d," as you write in your letter.

I would like to make an additional essential point.

If there was a time when some intellectuals

thought that there was no need to connect the laws of ethics and morality with Divine authority, inasmuch as these are rational principles, the fallacy of this thinking is now abundantly clear.

For we have seen, in our own day and age, a whole nation which had boasted of great philosophic advancement and ethical systems sink to the lowest depth of inhuman depravity and unprecedented barbarism.

And the reason for this was that they thought that they could establish a morality and ethics based on human reason, not subject to the authority of a Supreme Being, having themselves become a super race, as they thought. There is surely no need to elaborate on the obvious.

From what has been said above, it is clear that no individual can rest content with his own observance of the Divine Commandments, but it is his responsibility to his friends and neighbors, and society at large, to involve them in the observance of the Divine Commandments in daily life and conduct.

21 Kislev, 5733

I am in receipt of your letters of November 17th, etc, and may G-d grant the fulfillment of your heart's desire for good.

As for the matter of feeling depressed, etc., as you write, surely you know that one of the basic tenets of our faith and our Torah -- called Torat Emet, the Law of Truth -- is to have complete trust (bitachon) in G-d, whose benevolent Providence extends to each and every one individually.

It is necessary to reflect on this frequently, for then, one can see that, being under G-d's benevolent care, there is no room for anxiety, or worry. This is why the Torah is called Torat Chayim, the Law of Life, for it is the Jew's guide in life.

And although in certain situations it is necessary to consult a doctor and follow his instructions, because the Torah expects a Jew to do everything necessary in the natural order of things, it is at the same time, necessary to have complete bitachon in G-d and exclude all anxiety.

It would be well to have your mezuzot checked to make sure they are kosher and properly affixed. Also, you no doubt know of, and observe, the good custom of putting aside a coin for tzedaka - charity before lighting the candles bli neder - without future commitment.

May G-d grant that you should have good news to report.

if one declares on a weekday, "I undertake to become a Nazarite on the day that Moshiach will come," he is bound by it from that very moment. This clearly shows that Moshiach can arrive at any moment, as we say in our daily prayers, "Every day we hope for Your salvation."

(Peninei HaGeula)

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

In a previous column we discussed in brief the importance of charity as a preparation for and a means of hastening the Redemption. Today, we will delve a little more deeply into how and why tzedaka -- charity -- serves this function.

In the Talmud, our Sages tell us that by giving tzedaka we bring the Redemption closer. In addition, it also states, "Israel [the Jewish People] will not be redeemed except through tzedaka."

Chasidic philosophy gives us some insight into why tzedaka is of such importance in relation to the Redemption.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman, in his basic book of Chabad Chasidic philosophy, explains that tzedaka elevates the world more than any other mitzva.

Charity liberates the innermost forces of the soul and releases us from our personal exile, thereby effecting the release from our national exile.

Jewish teachings explain that in our daily lives -- our interaction with others, our performance of mitzvot, etc. -- we strive to imitate G-d.

The revelation of Moshiach, the Messianic Era, and the Resurrection of the Dead at the time of the Redemption, are the greatest forms of tzedaka, whereby the G-dly light will be revealed.

Tzedaka, according to Chasidut, is the vessel to contain these revelations. Metaphorically speaking, tzedaka is the wick which captures the flame of this G-dly light.

In addition to helping others through our giving of charity, thereby ultimately helping ourselves, we also help the Divine Presence, which accompanies us throughout this long, dark exile.

Jewish mystical teachings explain that tzedaka uplifts and "lessens the pain" of the Divine Presence which also suffers in exile.

Shmuel Butman

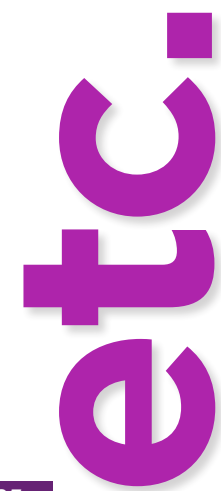
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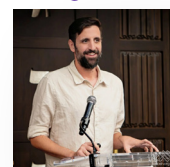
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Orange County Community Gifts Mezuzah to Nir Oz Survivor



A large number of community members gathered for a powerful and moving evening, "Choosing Life: From Survival to Resilience," featuring October 7 survivor and Kibbutz Nir Oz resident Barak Morag of Israel.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Orange County partnered with Chabad of Orange County, led by Rabbi Pesach and Chana Burston, to host the event at the Chabad Center in Monroe. In his deeply personal presentation, "From the Ashes of Kibbutz Nir Oz: A Journey from Loss to Light," Barak shared his story of survival, resilience, and determination inspiring the audience with his message of hope and unwavering spirit.

Barak was presented with a Mezuzah for the family's new home. "A mezuzah is a sacred parchment placed on the doorpost of a Jewish home as a symbol of faith and Divine protection," said Chana Burston at the presentation. "May this gift bless your new home with peace, joy and safety as you rebuild and continue forward with strength and courage."

ETHICS: CHAPTER 1

Shmaayah and Avtalyon received from them. Shmaayah would say:

Love work, loathe mastery over others, and avoid intimacy with the government.