



אור בישראל

A LIGHT FROM WITHIN ISRAEL

פרשת נשא - חג שבועות

ז' סיון תשפ"ו 23.5.2026

1

This week we have a holiday that falls out right next to Shabbat! Are you ready? Shavuot begins on Thursday before sunset, in the afternoon, with the lighting of holiday candles. It is customary to leave a memorial candle (neshama candle) in order to light the Shabbat candles from it the next day.

2

There is also a festive Kiddush at the start of the meal, special prayers, and many customs: the reading of the Book of Ruth, Tikkun Leil Shavuot (studying Torah throughout the night), decorating the home and synagogue with greenery, eating dairy foods, and more.

3

Shavuot is the holiday of the Giving of the Torah - the holiday on which we reached Mount Sinai, after the Exodus from Egypt and after counting the Omer, heard the Ten Commandments, and received the Torah. It is customary to come to the synagogue and also to bring children, even very young ones, to hear the Ten Commandments read anew. In synagogues and Chabad houses throughout Israel and the world, there are special celebrations and events for children for the reading of the Ten Commandments. Where will you be for the reading of the Ten Commandments?

4

And this year the holiday falls right next to Shabbat - two full days of holiness. In Israel we will celebrate Shabbat while the rest of the world will celebrate both Shabbat and the 2nd day of Shavuot. On Shabbat, synagogues in Israel will read the Torah portion of "Naso" from the Book of Numbers, which covers the Birkat Kohanim and the preparations for the people's continued journey to the Land of Israel. Our true journey, as in the portion, begins with listening and sensitivity toward one another - as we will learn from our story this week. Chag Sameach and Shabbat Shalom!

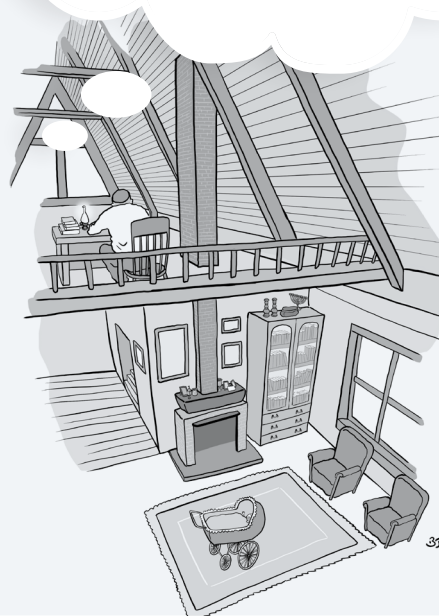
A STORY FOR SHABBAT

The Hearing Test

He goes by three names: The first is Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (רבי שניאור זלמן מליאדי) - that is, Rabbi Schneur Zalman who came from the town of Liadi. The second is "the Elder Rebbe" ("האדמור הזקן"), because he was the first Rebbe (an acronym for "our master, our teacher, and our rabbi") in the Chabad Hasidic dynasty. The third is "the Author of the Tanya" ("בעל התניא"), because he wrote the book of Tanya, a foundational text in Hasidism. In this story we will call him the Elder Rebbe. He was staying at the home of his son, Rabbi DovBer, and each of them sat in a separate room studying Torah. Suddenly, Rabbi DovBer's infant son began to cry. The Elder Rebbe quickly closed the book he was studying, and went to calm the baby. He picked him up, cared for him, and did not return to his studies until he saw that his grandson was calm. When he went back up to his room, he passed through the room where his son was studying. Rabbi DovBer had been deeply immersed in his learning. The Elder Rebbe stopped him and turned to him in astonishment: "Why did you not get up to comfort your crying baby?" The embarrassed son looked up and answered: "The baby was crying? I was so absorbed in my studies that I didn't hear at all..." His father said to him: "Remember, my son: if a person is so occupied with Torah study that he cannot hear the cry of a baby - he must examine carefully what is lacking in his learning. One must study seriously, but the Torah itself teaches us to be sensitive. If a baby is crying - you must hear it." (From the "Ligdol" book series)

Food for Thought

This is one of the most famous stories in the Hasidic movement, and its message is important: even if you are engaged in the most important matters, you must be sensitive to your surroundings, notice others' distress, and be alert to what is happening around you. Not only toward a baby, of course, but toward anyone who needs your help.





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A LIGHT FROM WITHIN ISRAEL

פרשת במדבר



FROM THE RUINS OF A LIFE, ONE CAN BUILD A PALACE

Rinat Russo sent me this week the story of her grandmother, which I think we can all learn from: "All the descendants of Grandma Chana Azoulay gathered to celebrate together. Four generations, an entire Shabbat. We're not even sure of her exact age - at least 92, maybe older; in Morocco there were no proper documents... She was born in Morocco, married at 15, and had two children, until her husband was murdered by Muslims. Grandma Chana did not break. A young widow with two babies, she then immigrated to Israel, straight to a transit camp in Kiryat Shmona (then called 'Khalsa')." Grandma Chana built her life with her own two hands: she worked hard jobs - picking cotton in the fields, cleaning offices, working in factories. All those years she survived wars and Katyusha rockets on the northern border, and according to her descendants, "not a single day did she stop believing, educating, and smiling." While working at the "Chula Textile" factory she met Avraham, and married again. They had six more children. Her granddaughter Rinat describes the innocence and faith of that older generation: "Grandma Chana pushed all of us to study and advance, yet she herself never learned to read or write. And yet, her prayers pierce the heavens. When asked: 'Grandma, how do you pray if you can't read?' she answers simply: 'I recite all the letters of the alphabet to God, and ask Him: Master of the Universe, please - You put these letters together into a prayer.'" Every night Grandma stands by the mezuzah and blesses each grandchild and great-grandchild by name. Her blessings are the most wonderful thing in the world - full of love, seeing the good in people, and endless optimism. She makes each grandchild feel like the only person in the world, and calls us constantly to remind us how good and loved we are. This Shabbat, as four generations of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren sat around her, we told her that without any academic degree, Grandma Chana is, in our opinion, the wisest woman in the world. From the ruins of her life she built a palace and our tribe.

FROM THE DIARY OF A SHALIACH

Sagi Reuven writes to us: When I presented the "And Build Jerusalem" project to the students of the "Laude Re'ut" school in Bucharest, Romania, there was great joy. Each student received a brick with a word representing a certain value. The students painted and decorated their bricks, wrote personal prayers, and together assembled a "Wall" from all the bricks. I explained to the students the significance of the Western Wall and the custom of placing notes in the Wall - they were fully willing to participate and take part. Everyone was very happy to engage in the project and in the creative work. During the construction of the bricks, there was a moment that held great significance for me: several students helped each other glue a brick inscribed with the word "Unity" - the very value that represented what they were doing at that moment. The mutual help in that part illustrated the camaraderie between them and the pleasant atmosphere in the classroom - they truly felt they were doing something meaningful. Also, while working on their personal and community requests, the students seemed to clear their minds, held their notes, and deeply considered what to write - what mattered most to them at that moment. In every class that participated in the project, there was great involvement and a desire to contribute beyond the task and



build the display. The connection to Jerusalem Day was moving and meaningful.

Around the Shabbat Table

- What values, in your opinion, are most important to make up the "Wall" of your class or school?
- In today's fast-paced digital world, is it easy or hard for us to find moments of inner reflection and deep thought about what truly matters to us?
- Do you have in your family or close surroundings a figure (like Grandma Chana) who serves as an inspiration to you for resilience, optimism, and love?
- What is "life wisdom" in your eyes, and how is it different from the wisdom gained through university or school studies?



דף הפרשה מוקדש לעילוי
נשמת החיילים הקדושים
מיכאל בן חמו ואילי טויטו הי"ד



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