

## THE LITTLE THINGS

By Ozer Bergman

“Yaakov remained alone” (Genesis 32:25). He returned to get the pennyworth jugs (*Chullin* 91a).

“And from the remaining jugs a miracle was made for the Roses [Jews]” (from *Maoz Tzur*).

“How many [Chanukah] candles does one light? On the first night, he lights one. From then on, he continues to add one each night, until on the last night there will be eight” (*Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 671:2).



We all know the problem. We have our minds and hearts set on accomplishing a Jewishness goal that's important to us and, often enough, to the entire mission of the Jewish people. (Torah study is one example, but not the only one.) So we set out or sit down to do it and – your dumbphone rings, beeps or plays a piano riff. Whatever. You stop. You get up. You check the message, take/return the call, finish talking and writing yourself a reminder, and sit down again to learn.

Now you're ready to go and just as you start – instant replay. Déjà vu all over again. Some of us were already frustrated the first time and more of us get knocked the second time. With a third time the crowd is really getting thin, and if there's a fourth it's a game of Last Man Standing. Our frustration is real, and it's understandable. One “bad” day doesn't make us give up altogether, but it's enough to make most of us give up for the day. Tomorrow we'll do it. Tomorrow we'll start this project.

And that's sad. Because as corny and trite as it is, there's only one today. There's no guarantee that tomorrow will give us a better opportunity. (And, deep

down, we know tomorrow doesn't come for everyone.) Very often, tomorrow is a repeat of today, which was a repeat of yesterday. It happens so often that you feel like Shakespeare: “Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.” So Project Torah-Study, Project Pray-With-Focus, and/or Project Hitbodedut get postponed.

We all know the results of postponing these and other good projects: little or no Torah study and lots of ignorance; confused, unremembered prayers; a distant, cold and uneasy relationship with God; and plenty of frustration, disappointment and bitterness. What can we do to accomplish more and feel better about ourselves and our Jewishness?

We can take a lesson from Reb Noson. He was an accomplished, diligent Torah scholar. He was also thirsty for more Torah and showed up at the study hall early in the morning, raring to go. But for him, too, it was always something (just not his cellphone). Rebbe Nachman gave Reb Noson a key that we can all use: “*A bissel iz oikh gut*. A little is also good.” The block of time you had set for Torah got chopped in half? Whittled down to a third or a quarter of what you planned? Only two minutes remain from the two hours you wanted? *Grab them! A bissel iz oikh gut*. A little is also good!

For whatever reason, the human mind thinks that small, little or few means “worthless.” Yaakov Avinu knew the jugs were only pennyworth. But to replace them would take away a few moments from Torah study or proper prayer. Those are priceless. Their results – broader, deeper Torah knowledge for the former, deeper faith for the latter – are also priceless.

This is true for other mitzvahs, as well. When it comes to giving charity, even though small change looks like chump change, our Sages teach that God views it differently. Whether you do much or little, as long as you do what you can for your Father in Heaven (*Menachot* 110a). When it comes to visiting the sick, dropping in for five minutes can be just as much a mitzvah as staying for an hour. (Maybe even more, depending on the

## SIDEPATH

Rebbe Nachman taught:

Through the mitzvah of kindling the Chanukah lights, we draw down holy *da'at*, the knowledge of God, upon ourselves. This *da'at* is “the goodly oil” (Psalms 133:2) of memory, whereby a person at all times bears in mind that everything in this world, both in general and in particular, has meaning only in relation to the World to Come (*Advice*, Chanukah 2).

patient's state and if you're a welcome guest or a nudnik.)

Imagine if the Maccabees had said, “Only one jug of oil? That's not going to do us any good. Why bother lighting the Menorah tonight? We'll wait till we get the new shipment next week.” *Oy vey!* Words cannot describe the kind of loss that would have been. Nor can they describe our loss if we fail to value moments of Torah study, prayer or being kind. But words also cannot describe the light of Chanukah or the brilliance that we shine by gladly taking advantage of the tiny pieces of time we do have.

So take in another little lesson from these last nights of Chanukah. Just yesterday you lit one candle, and now it's seven and eight. You did all that! Little by little. 'Cause *A bissel iz oikh gut*.\*

\* WARNING: Apply “A little is also good” only when you can do hardly anything. When you can do a lot, *do a lot!*

Based on *Aveneha Barzel* #65

*A gutn Shabbos!*  
*Shabbat Shalom!*  
*A freilekhen Chanukah!*  
*Chanukah samei'ach!*

Follow us on Twitter @OfBreslov

## THE MESSAGE IN THE MENORAH

By Yossi Katz

Each year when Chanukah time swings around, fond memories of lighting the menorah come to mind. I remember being with my family, singing *Maoz Tzur* and eating latkes with applesauce. But year after year as we continue to light the menorah, are these experiences just a nostalgic ritual, or do they grow and become exciting and ever more meaningful?

The laws of lighting the Chanukah menorah contain some interesting contrasts. On the one hand, the Arizal teaches that a tremendously awesome light descends when we kindle the menorah. On the other hand, we are told to light the menorah below ten *tefachim* (handbreadths) – a place so low that God's Presence does not descend there. Also, on Shabbat it is a mitzvah to light candles and enjoy their light, but on Chanukah we are allowed to gaze at the Chanukah candles only from a distance. Therefore we light the *shammash* candle so that we don't utilize the menorah's light.

Reb Noson explains that the essence of the Chanukah light is so lofty and removed from this world that we aren't yet worthy of it – we can only admire it from a distance. But the fact that this light can descend into our lowly world, in the middle of the workweek and into our very own homes, is simply miraculous. God is sending us a message: Even though we may feel far away from Him and we may not yet be worthy of His light, He is nevertheless shining down to us.

The main mitzvah of lighting is just one candle per household. This is because it's enough for an entire family to look at the light and reflect on this great miracle. But a person who feels

distant from God because of all the wrong he has done may not feel worthy of having this great light shine down all the way to his lowly place. Therefore our Sages teach that a better way to light (*Mehadrin*) is for each individual to light his own candle. This way, each and every one of us realizes that the further we are, the happier we should be now that God is shining down to us. For if we are truly so distant and yet God has not abandoned us, how great is His love for us and how joyous we should be now!

## The light of the Chanukah candles reflects an outpouring of light from Above

But the very best way to light (*Mehadrin Min HaMehadrin*) is for each individual to light his own candle and add another candle every night. During each and every day of our lives, God performs numerous miraculous acts of kindness for each of us. God created us and will in fact finish what He started, bringing about our final redemption. Let us realize that this process has already begun and that every day He is miraculously bringing us closer, step by step. As we gaze at the holy Chanukah lights, let us remind ourselves and affirm our belief that even though we may be far, the journey home is already underway.

Based on *Likutey Halakhot*,  
*Hilkhos Shiluach HaKen* #4

## KITZUR L" M WEEKLY

18 — "Rabbi Yonatan related – a basket" (*Bava Batra 74a*)

2. A person must break his anger with compassion. In other words, when he becomes angry, he must not give vent to his anger by acting cruelly. Rather, to the contrary, he must then prevail [to act] with great compassion regarding that which he wishes to be angry about, and temper his anger with compassion. In this way, a crown is made for the humble people who flee from honor and authority, and they are then forced to accept this honor and authority.

3. According to the diminishment of faith, so is God's countenance hidden and His anger manifest, God forbid. Then the tzaddikim flee from positions of authority and honor, and the world has no true leader. But when people break their anger with compassion, Divine anger is thereby tempered and the true tzaddikim accept honor and positions of leadership. Then people merit a true leader who will show compassion to them and lead them properly, bringing each person to the ultimate goal.

 BRESLOV  
RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE

Jerusalem, Israel

Tel: 972.2.582.4641 • Fax: 972.2.582.5542

North America:

POB 587 • Monsey, NY 10952-0587

1-800-33-BRESLOV

Tel: 732.534.7263 • Fax: 732.608.8461

To subscribe to this weekly publication please visit:  
[breslov.org/pathways](http://breslov.org/pathways)

To dedicate in memory or merit of someone please  
email: [pathways@breslov.org](mailto:pathways@breslov.org)

