

# THE CHABAD WEEKLY

Vol 7, #13

## The Brick Factory

Before they could become a people, chosen by G-d as His "light unto the nations," the children of Israel had to first undergo the "smelting pit of Egypt." For 210 years they were "strangers in a land that is not theirs," the last eighty-six of which they were inducted into forced labor by the Egyptians, primarily in the manufacture of bricks.

Why bricks? Nothing is incidental in G-d's world, particularly in the history of His people. If we were forged as a nation at the brick kilns of Egypt, then the brick is significant to our mission in life.

"And the brick served them as stone"  
Man is a builder. Some build physical structures: homes, cities, roads, hi- or low-tech machines, and a host of other useful (or useless) objects. Others engage in more metaphysical construction, structuring words, hues or sounds so that they house ideas or feelings. But all build a life, forging materials from their environment, their society and their own psyche into an edifice that serves a certain function and aim. Man being endowed by his Creator with free choice, he might make this a material or spiritual aim, a selfish or altruistic one, a positive or negative one; or he can make it the ultimate aim of "building a dwelling for G-d" by devoting his life to the fulfillment of G-d's will as revealed in the Torah.

The materials we use fall under two general categories: G-d-given and man-made. Much of what we build our lives with was already here when we arrived on the scene, ready for use, or with its potential implicit in it, awaiting discovery and realization. But G-d empowered us to do more than simply develop His world. Desiring that we be His "partners in creation," He imparted to us the ability to create potential where no such potential exists.

Therein lies the deeper significance of the bricks we molded and fired as we matured as a people. In the eleventh chapter of Genesis, the Torah describes the invention of the brick: Originally, the survivors of the Flood inhabited mountainous regions, and quarried stone as a building material; but then they settled in the valley of Shinar (later Babylon), where they desired to build "a city and a tower whose head reached to the heavens." Where would they find a material strong enough for such a massive structure? Someone had an idea: "They said one to the other 'Let us mold bricks, and bake them with fire.' And the brick served them as stone, and clay served them as mortar."

The "stone" represents those materials with which G-d provides us to build our lives. Not that man needn't toil—the stone must be cut from the mountain, transported, hewn into shape, and fitted with many others for a structure to be raised. But the stone is there, solid and fit for the task, awaiting development. In our personal lives, these are the elements that are naturally qualified to serve as part of a home for G-d and readily lend themselves to this end: our positive character traits, the sacred times and places in creation (e.g. the twenty-four hours of Shabbat, the Holy Land), objects and forces designated for the performance of a mitzvah (e.g. a Torah scroll, a pair of tefillin).

Then there are those elements that are as qualified a building material as raw clay: our selfish and animalistic instincts, and a material world that obscures the truth of its Creator. Elements that, by nature, are uncondusive, or even contrary, to anything good and G-dly. To include these elements in the "dwelling for G-d" we make of our lives, we must forge bricks: knead and mold them into a shape they have never known, fire them in the kiln of self-sacrifice and love of G-d, until they become as solid and supportive as the sacred "stones" in our edifice. (Based on an address by the Rebbe, Shabbat Shemot, 5726 (January 15, 1966) and on other occasions) – meaningfullife.com

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**"An angel of G-d appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of the thorn bush; and he looked, and behold, the thorn bush was burning with fire, but the thorn bush was not consumed."**

**(3:2)** Man is likened to a tree of the field: the Torah Sage is a fruit-bearing tree, whereas the simple Jew is likened to a tree that does not give fruit. Nonetheless, the "flame of fire" burns precisely in the humble "thorn bush" -- in the simple and unlearned Jew.

A Jew who prays and recites Psalms with simple faith in G-d possesses a fire of holiness derived from purity of heart, even if he does not understand the words. Furthermore, the "thorn bush is not consumed." The burning flame of the simple Jew can never be extinguished, as he is perpetually thirsty for Torah and mitzvot -- unlike his more learned counterpart, who is able to quench his thirst with the waters of Torah. (The Baal Shem Tov)

**"Moses returned to G-d and said, L-rd! Why have You mistreated this people? Since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name, he made things worse... You have not saved this people at all."** (5:22-

**23)** We are not allowed to resign ourselves to our present situation of exile with the excuse that "such is the will of G-d." The harshness of the exile is a sign that the Redemption is near, yet it is still bitter and painful. Therefore, even while reaffirming our absolute faith in the principle that "The ways of G-d are just," we are also to express our anguish with the prayerful outcry "Ad Masai?" -- "How much longer?" and ask for the immediate coming of Moshiach. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe) – ascent.org.il



**Our Sages describe the current Jewish month in which we find ourselves, Tevet,** as "the month when the body derives pleasure from the body." Chasidic teachings explain that this means that in this month, G-d's essence derives pleasure from the service of the Jewish people within the physical world. In its most complete sense, this service is revealed to us by tzadikim-the righteous.

The 24th of Tevet (this year coinciding with Sunday, January 18) is the anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad Chasidism. Rabbi Shneur Zalman opened a new path which allowed the teaching of the previously hidden aspects of the Torah - Pnimitiyut HaTorah - to be comprehended through the intellect and thus reveal additional G-dliness within the world.

The number 24 written in Hebrew letters is "kaf-dalet." On the eve of the 24th of Tevet, 5752 (1992) the Rebbe noted that kaf-dalet relates to the verse, "I will make your windows shining rubies - kadkod." In Chasidic thought, kadkod is associated with the expression from the Midrash, "I will do as this and as this," i.e., that there are two approaches to G-dly service, one beginning with the revelation from above, and the other beginning with the elevation of the worldly plane. The ultimate level of service is to fuse the two.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman was not only a master in the area of Pnimitiyut HaTorah. He was a gaon, a great scholar, of the revealed parts of the Torah as well.

This quality of Rabbi Shneur Zalman's is alluded to in his name, Shneur, which can be broken up into two Hebrew words, "shnei" and "ohr," meaning "two lights." He illuminated the world with his greatness in the two lights of the Torah.

Thus, it comes as no surprise that Rabbi Shneur Zalman, who illuminated the world with the revealed and hidden lights of Torah, also fused the two approaches to G-dly service. (From: L'Chaim 5763, #750) – lchaimweekly.org

(HERE APPEARS AN EMENDATION TO THE TEXT OF TORAH OR, RELEVANT ONLY IN HEBREW. TRANSLATOR).  
 GROANING BY ITSELF WON'T DO A BIT OF GOOD. A GROAN IS ONLY A KEY TO OPEN THE HEART AND EYES, SO AS NOT TO SIT THERE WITH FOLDED ARMS, BUT TO PLAN ORDERLY WORK AND ACTIVITY, EACH PERSON WHEREVER HE CAN BE EFFECTIVE, TO CAMPAIGN FOR BOLSTERING TORAH, SPREADING TORAH AND THE OBSERVANCE OF MITZVOT. ONE PERSON MIGHT DO THIS THROUGH HIS WRITING, ANOTHER WITH HIS ORATORY, ANOTHER WITH HIS WEALTH. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM TEVET 23).

**Changing the world is a twofold task.**

**Bringing spirituality into the world is principally the man's task. Elevating the world to become spiritual is principally the woman's task.**

**Men, generally, are meant to deal with the present. The future -- and those who will live within it -- is in the hands of the women.**

From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe; rendered by Tzvi Freeman.

**PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY CLASSES**

|                         |                                  |  |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| <b><u>Sunday</u></b>    | <b>8:00 AM</b>                   | <b>Gemara-Tractate Shabbos (men)</b>               |
| <b><u>Monday</u></b>    | <b>8:00 PM</b>                   | <b>Chumash (men and women)</b>                     |
| <b><u>Tuesday</u></b>   | <b>8:00 PM</b>                   | <b>Gemara-Tractate Makos (men)</b>                 |
|                         | <b>9:00 PM</b>                   | <b>Tanya (men and women) with Rabbi Wolf</b>       |
| <b><u>Wednesday</u></b> | <b>8:30 PM</b>                   | <b>Halacha and Tanya (women)</b>                   |
| <b><u>Thursday</u></b>  | <b>10:00 AM</b>                  | <b>Chassidus (women)</b>                           |
|                         | <b>8:00 PM</b>                   | <b>Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students</b> |
| <b><u>Daily</u></b>     | <b>6:45 AM to 7:15 AM</b>        | <b>Chasiddus</b>                                   |
|                         | <b>Between Mincha and Maariv</b> | <b>Halacha</b>                                     |

**DAILY MINYONIM:**

**Shacharis: Mon-Fri: 6:00 AM and 7:30 AM**  
**Sunday: 9:00 AM**

**Mincha/Maariv: 5:10 PM**

**SHABBOS PARSHAS SHEMOS**  
**Shabbos Mevorchim**  
**January 16, 2004**  
**Candlelighting:(Los Angeles) 4:50 PM**  
**Friday Mincha: 5:05 PM**

**LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:30 AM**

**SHABBAT MORNING**

- **Tehillim 8:00 AM**
- **Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush, Cholent & Farbrengen**
- **Chumash 4:10 PM**
- **Mincha 4:40 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit**
- **Shabbat ends 5:50 PM**

**Seuda Shlishit** is being sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Hazany in memory of the yartzeit of Rueben Khakshoor.

**Yartzeits:** Rueben Khakshoor – Teves 27, Yehuda Noybart – Teves 29, Dovid Sabi – Teves 28

**Happy Birthday** to Berel Meisel, Roey Urman and Miriam Staub.

**Happy Anniversary** to Yossi and Ethel Perles.

**Mazel Tov** to Rabbi and Mrs. Mendy Weunsch on the birth of their son, Chaim Hirsh and to the grandparents: Dr. and Dr. Dauer.



The Shul wishes its condolences to Dr. Shmuel Einstein on the loss of his mother. May he know of no more sorrow.



**GOOD SHABBOS!**