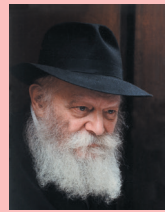


# L'Chaim



## 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.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

## Heart-Shaped Love

By Rabbi Mendel Rubin



At some point in our lives, all of us learn that the heart that is pumping

inside our bodies does not exactly like the famous red heart symbol that appears on decorations, cards, and oh-so-many social media messages.

While technically the heart symbol may be anatomically inaccurate, there may still be something we can learn from it. After all, the saintly Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chassidism, taught that one can learn a lesson how to serve G-d from everything we see or hear.

Here's my take on the matter, a lesson that I think we can learn. The love-heart symbol has two protrusions, two curves that may appear separate or distinct. Yet, as they draw down, they come closer together, until they form a singular unified point on the bottom. Perhaps the message is, yes, we do have our differences, but love ought to find that common shared essential point, that core where we are (or become) one.

This is hopefully true of a couple, or any good friendship. It is also true of our people, the Jewish nation. We have so many ways that we are different, so many areas where we might think differently from one another. That is natural, and even healthy, as long as when it comes down

to it, we share that same unifying point. What is that united core? It is the inner core soul connection that we all share.

We can take this idea a step further by exploring two definitions of ahavat Yisroel, love of a fellow Jew, offered by the first Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, and his grandson, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, the third Chabad Rebbe. In the 32nd chapter of his magnum opus, the Tanya, Rabbi Shneur Zalman lays out his vision of ahavat Yisroel – one where we focus on what unifies us, our G-dly soul. His grandson, in his own work, explains that ahavat Yisroel is actually celebrating and appreciating our differences, and how we each fulfill the other.

One way to characterize the two opinions would be to say that Rabbi Shneur Zalman, known as the Alter Rebbe, sees love. Despite our differences, like the unifying point at the bottom of the heart symbol. Rabbi Menachem Mendel, known as the Tzemach Tzedek, sees love as Because of our differences, much like the two protruding curves.

Taking these ideas to a practical level, the love-shaped heart can teach us to respect, appreciate, and feel deeply connected to our fellow Jew even if they think, say or do differently than us. Even a legitimate disagreement should only be a springboard to show our love for one another. How does one express that love? Now that is for you to determine...

# SLICE OF LIFE

## My Gulag Life: Stories of a Soviet Prisoner

The stories of Reb Mendel Futerfas adapted by Dovid Zaklikowski



*The Unforgettable, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Futerfas, known informally as "Reb Mendel," is a famous Chabad Chossid who educated and inspired many. He is known for having defied the communist and bolstered Jewish life in the USSR and for having been incarcerated for over 8 years in Siberian gulags.*

*The following are some of the memories he shared and the lessons and inspiration he derived from them. Despite the challenges he faced, he prevailed and continued with his mission.*

### SEEKING BELIEVERS

One Yom Kippur, as I recited the prayer "And All Believe," a painful thought entered my mind.

Is it really true that all believe? Does that burly, bourgeois man in my room truly believe?

I quickly pushed these thoughts from my mind, telling myself, How can you think thoughts that are in opposition to the words inscribed in a prayerbook? If they were written, they are surely true.

A week later, my cellmate approached me. "Is it true that you are Jewish?" he asked. Without waiting for an answer, he said, "I am also Jewish, and I also prayed on Yom Kippur."

### AN UNLIKELY HELPER

Each prison had a self-appointed leader, a prisoner who terrorized the rest. The ringleader in one prison was named Boris. One day, he saw me praying.

Boris mocked me: "Do you have nothing better to do than pray? Do you actually believe it will help you?"

I replied: "I don't recall asking you for advice, and I don't plan on consulting with you in the future."

Upon hearing this, Boris became angry and said, "I won't forget what you've said to me."

A few weeks later, the prison camp was disbanded, and all the prisoners were divided among other camps. Boris was part of my group, and once again he became ringleader. Over the next day, several prisoners approached me with news that Boris was conspiring against me. I told them, "The tyrant may be here, but G-d is, too."

Appointed the task of allocating labor assignments, Boris paired me with someone who left all the difficult work to me. The work was incredibly taxing, and I felt that I wouldn't survive more than a few days.

I had just received a package of oil and nuts, which were difficult to procure in prison, from my family. I sent them to Boris via another prisoner, and the bribe worked: by the next day I had an easier job. But the story does not end there.

A medical board was scheduled to check the prisoners a few days later. Boris informed me that the board was coming, and that if I feigned illness, I'd receive days off work.

I told him I would rather take sick days for Pesach holiday, which was fast approaching. Because I'd have little food to eat, I was concerned I wouldn't have strength to work.

"Durak!" he told me in Russian. "Idiot! If they offer you rest, take it. If you'll need it again, I'll tell you what to do."

I was able to celebrate Pesach more easily that year.

### THE PACKAGE

During my imprisonment, I was allowed to receive packages from family and friends.

They sent basic necessities, clothing, and non-perishable food. Of course, they couldn't send ritual items, since it would compromise me, and be confiscated.

It would take months for a package to arrive, and I hoped dearly that they would send Matzah for Pesach. Being that it was food, I thought my jailers would not take notice, and I would be able to fulfill one of the most important holiday requirements. Unfortunately, no package arrived. Eating matzah that Pesach was another mitzvah that, sadly, I could not perform.

The day after Pesach, I was given a package. It contained matzah, and I immediately understood that the prison had deliberately withheld the package from me until after the holiday. I began to devour the matzah, but quickly stopped myself. I wrapped up the remaining matzah with a paper and put it into my pocket, to save for next year's Pesach.

### LIFE ON A ROPE

Prisoners would often gather for discussion and banter. Usually, someone would nostalgically speak about his former occupation, which was often fascinating.

One prisoner told us he had been a tightrope walker at a circus. He described how he would dance and perform tricks while walking on a rope between two trees or beams. Most of the prisoners were from small cities and towns and had never been to a circus, so they believed his tale to be a figment of his imagination.

He told the skeptics that one day, when they'd have time, he would perform for everyone. On the day Stalin died, the prison guards gave everyone a day off. True to his word, the tightrope walker, along with many other prisoners, put on a performance, walking on a rope tied high between two trees.

When he came down, a crowd gathered around and begged him to explain how he did it. He had practiced for many years, he said, "but there is one thing that you need to remember: Do not look down. Do not think about the danger. Just remain focused entirely on the goal, and continue forward. When you manage to focus your mind, it is easy to succeed."

I thought to myself: Life is a tightrope. Follow the expert's advice.

## 100 Shluchim In Russia Gather At The Great Synagogue Of Kaliningrad



Eighty-six years ago, the Nazis ym" shattered the windows of the Great Synagogue of Kaliningrad and set the building ablaze. Recently, the city witnessed the ultimate victory over the murderers in a scene of Jewish pride the likes of which the city's Jews have not witnessed in a long time.

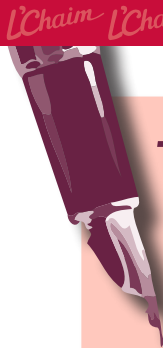
100 Chabad Shluchim - emissaries from Russia gathered in the Russian exclave which is between Lithuania and Poland for a weekend of unity and inspiration. The weekend-long gathering kicked off with the inauguration of the mikvah located in the basement of the recently restored shul building.

The keynote address was delivered by Chief Rabbi of Russia Berel Lazar, who expounded on the great zechus of increasing taharah. He also urged all local Jews and Jewish tourists from across Russia to frequent the shul, and take part in the many activities. At the event, attended by many community members, Kaliningrad Shliach Rabbi Avraham Boruch Deutsch described the difficult process of building the mikvah and expressed the community's gratitude to all those who helped make the Mikvah possible.

## Shema Yisroel

The eyes are covered with the right hand when saying Shema to avoid anything that might distract one from complete concentration. For the Shema-which declares the Oneness of G-d-is the foundation of Judaism and should be said with full attention.





# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

## THE BENEFIT OF SUMMER CAMP

By the Grace of G-d  
3rd of Menachem Av, 5720  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. Aron Dov Sufrin  
26 Linthorpe Road  
London, N .16

Greeting and Blessing:

After the very long interval, I received your letter of the 27th of Tammuz. Needless to say, you need not apologize for writing in English, for the important thing is not the language but contents of the letter.

I was especially gratified to read about the progress of the Lubavitcher House, and especially about the increase in the number of students and campers in Camp Gan Israel. I have often emphasized that the summer in general, and camp activities in particular, offer extraordinary opportunities to benefit the children, whose attention is not distracted by secular studies during the summer.

I hope you will make efforts in this direction, and thus also create and widen the channels to receive G-d's blessing for Parnosso. I further hope that you will carry on your activities in a spirit of complete faith in the Almighty, and with confidence and joy, as taught by the saintly Baal Shem Tov, whose 200th anniversary

of the completion of his life's work coincides with the current year.

Hoping to hear good news from you,  
With blessing,



## BECOMING A LEADER OF A GIRLS' GROUP AT AGE TWELVE

By the Grace of G-d  
20th of Marcheshvan, 5726  
[November 15, 1965]  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Blessing and Greeting:

This is to confirm receipt of your letter, in which you write that you were invited to a leaders' meeting, to be in charge of a new group of girls, even though you yourself will reach the age of 13 only in Kislev.

Surely you know that in accordance with the Din of our Torah, Jewish girls mature before boys, and become duty-bound to observe the Mitzvos a year earlier, that is from the age of 12. Thus, you became a full-fledged Jewess last Kislev, and one of the Mitzvos which you are duty-bound to observe, like all Jews, is the Mitzvah of V'Ohavto L'Reacho Komocho. This means that it is your very pleasant duty to do all you can to bring other Jewish children closer to their Father in Heaven. There is no need to elaborate on this further.

I wish you Hatzlocho in your said activities and in all your endeavors.

With blessing,

P.S. What was said is particularly valid this year, which is a Shmittah year, as explained in the enclosed Rosh Hashonoh message, which I trust you will read with keen interest, since it is timely throughout the year.

# MOSHIACH MATTERS

What is the difference between exile and redemption?--our consciousness of G-d's presence. All the material diminsions of our present existence will continue in the

Era of the Redemption. Our souls will be contained within physical bodies, we will derive our nurture from physical food, and we will live together with gentile neighbors. All these aspects of material existence, however, will be suffused with an awareness of G-d.

(Sound the Great Shofar)

# A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*The last moments of exile are referred to in the Talmud as the "birth pangs of Moshiach." There is more to be said about this analogy, though.*

*The Vilna Gaon said that all the days of exile are like the duration of a pregnancy, and the final stage is comparable to the birth pangs immediately prior to birth.*

*The "Chofetz Chaim," Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, elucidated this concept in his work Shem Olam (the following is a translation by Rabbi Moshe Miller, Targum Press):*

*When a woman has a difficult labor and no longer has the strength to bear the pain, the midwife comforts her with the fact that her travails will not continue much longer. She tells the suffering woman that the pain itself is a sure sign of imminent birth. This concept applies in our case, too. For if the hardships were not so overwhelming, we could see ourselves bearing the pain for a prolonged period. Moreover, the fact that these hardships abate from time to time is a part of the "birth process," just as labor pains subside briefly and then resume.*

*However, when the hardships become so overpowering that we can no longer bear them, we can certainly assume that G-d will reveal the final Redemption very soon indeed.*

*Now, when a woman is in the midst of a difficult labor, all the comforts the midwife offers her may be of no avail. However, in our case, we can be certain that the moment of birth will arrive. As the verse clearly indicates, "'Will I bring on labor and not open the womb?' says the L-rd" (Isaiah 66:9).*

*The Jewish people have experienced an interminably long and difficult pregnancy and a relentless labor. Certainly G-d will make good on His promise and deliver the Redemption immediately!*

Shmuel Beilman

## 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.



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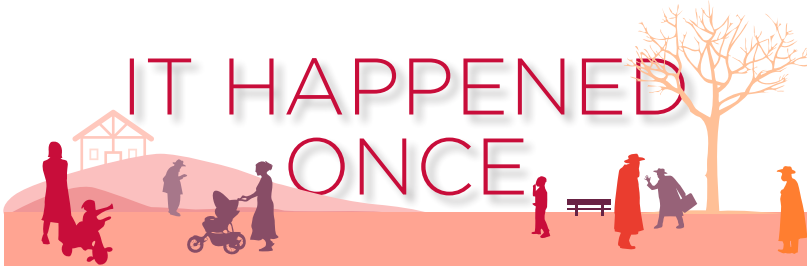
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# IT HAPPENED ONCE



Rabbi Samuel ben Sosarte, a great scholar of the third century, lived in the land of Israel. During one of his journeys to Rome, Rabbi Samuel found a string of beautiful pearls lying on the road. He picked the necklace up and admired its rare beauty.

"I wonder who lost such a rare treasure," he thought. "Surely it belonged to a lady of great wealth and prominence," he concluded.

He continued walking and soon came upon an excited crowd. He stopped to see what the gathering was all about.

In the center of the crowd stood a royal herald, reading a proclamation:

"To all citizens of Rome. Be it known that her Imperial Majesty this day lost a pearl necklace of rare beauty in the streets of Rome. Whosoever finds it is hereby ordered to return it to Her Majesty within thirty days, and he shall be richly rewarded. Should the finder return it on the thirty-first day, or after, he shall be beheaded!"

The proclamation was repeated several times, while the growing crowd spoke excitedly of the lucky man who found it and the reward he would get.

Rabbi Samuel listened to the proclamation in silence. He felt the pearl necklace in his pocket, and he knew it was the Queen's. He also knew that a rich reward awaited him at the palace should he return the necklace in good time. But he was in no hurry to return it.

A day passed, and another, and many more. Every day he heard the proclamation again and again, promising wither reward to the finder or cruel death, should it not be returned within thirty days. The whole populace of Rome was seething with excitement. Still Rabbi Samuel held on to the necklace.

Finally the thirtieth day came. It was the last day to return the necklace to the Queen. Rabbi Samuel took it out, looked at it, and put it away again.

On the thirty-first day, immediately after prayers, Rabbi Samuel went to the Queen.

"Inform the lady-in-waiting that an old Jew wishes to see the Queen to tell her where her lost necklace is," he said to the guard.

The guard disappeared at once, and hastily returned, bidding Rabbi Samuel to appear before the Queen.

"I am indeed privileged to return this necklace to Your Majesty," Rabbi Samuel said, giving the Queen the necklace.

The queen, who had already given up hope of ever seeing her beautiful necklace again, gasped with excitement as she beheld her most cherished treasure. For a moment her eyes were full of gratitude to the aged Rabbi. Then she realized that it was the thirty-first day since she had lost it.

"When did you find it?" she asked.

"Thirty-one days ago," replied Rabbi Samuel.

"Then why did you risk your life, instead of collecting your reward?" inquired the Queen.

"Your Majesty," Rabbi Samuel explained, "had I brought the necklace within thirty days, it would have appeared that I returned it either for the sake of your reward, or for fear of your punishment. But neither is the true reason. I am returning it simply because our Torah commands us to return lost property to its owner. We are happy to fulfill the commandments of our Torah without any

reward. Moreover, we are ready to die for the observance of our precepts..."

"Blessed is the G-d of the Jews!" exclaimed the Queen.

Not merely was Rabbi Samuel's life spared, but he was highly honored. For many years the story of Rabbi Samuel's pure and sincere honesty was the talk of all the people of Rome.

Reprinted from "Talks and Tales"

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

### "Count (literally, Raise) the heads of the congregation..." (1:2).

When Moses was commanded to arrange a census of the Jewish people, the word used was "Se-oo" more literally meaning "raise" count. This indicates that the counting was actually an elevation for the Jews. The census brought about the resting of the Divine presence on the Jewish nation because it indicated that each individual could affect the destiny of the entire people. Similarly, Maimonides writes: "Each person should consider the entire world as balanced between good and evil deeds. His one action could sway the world to the side of good, bringing salvation to the whole world. (Shaloh)

### "Each person to his flag with signs for the house of their ancestors" (2:2).

Every individual must ask himself, "When will my deeds reach the level of those of my ancestors?" Our goal should be that our forefathers' achievements will act as a "signpost" for our own actions. (Sefat Emet)

### The L-rd bless you and guard you. The L-rd make His countenance shine upon you and be gracious to you. The L-rd turn his countenance toward you and grant you peace (Priestly blessing)

This special blessing was uttered by the priests in the Holy Temple and continues to be invoked by kohanim in synagogues today, but with one significant difference:

In the Holy Temple, the kohanim would actually pronounce G-d's ineffable Name, indicative of the sublime level of holiness that was brought down by their blessing, whereas today we are forbidden to do so.

When Moshiach comes kohanim will return to their former practice, at which time the power of the blessing itself will be even greater than during the time of the Holy Temple. (Sichot Kodesh, Parshat Mishpatim, 5752)

### Why do kohanim raise their hands when blessing the Jewish people?

Our Sages taught that while giving blessings is both proper and appropriate, it is extremely important that we also "raise our hands" and do something to actually help the person in need.



### 8:10 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area  
8 Sivan / June 14  
Torah Portion Nasso  
Ethics Ch 1  
Shabbat ends 9:19 pm