



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**

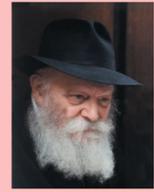
Dedicated in honor of our dear children
Yisroel, Mendel, Rosie, Riva, & Leah י"ד
 לברכה והצלחה בכל העניינים בגור", בשמחה וטוב לב
 By Ezzy and Malka Rappaport
 Bay Harbor Islands, FL

L'Chaim

בסיון
1827
 8 Sivan, 5784
 June 14, 2024
 The Weekly Publication
 for Every Jewish Person
 תוסד תורה וישיבה
 Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
 "To You I lifted up my eyes, You Who dwell in heaven" (Psalm 123:1)

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...

