

Naso

THE WEISS EDITION

# *Light points*

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THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE  
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

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נשא

# Naso

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ד:כב | 4:22

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נשא את ראש

*Take a headcount.*

## *By a Raise of Heads*

The command נשא את ראש at the beginning of Parshas Naso means to take a census.

However, the literal translation of this phrase is “raise the heads.” This peculiar expression alludes to a fundamental and guiding principle of Jewish life.

The Mishna instructs us: “Be bold as a leopard... to do the will of your Father in heaven!”<sup>1</sup> This means to be unashamed in the face of scorn.<sup>2</sup> This directive is the principle with which the Alter Rebbe opens his Shulchan Aruch, his Code of Jewish Law.

Practically, how do we fulfill this mandate? Through נשא את ראש.

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1. Avos 5:20.

2. Tur, Orach Chaim 1:1.

When confronted by ridicule, the Torah advises us to “raise our heads,” i.e., to arouse within ourselves a spirit of *exalt-  
edness*, enabling us to rise above and be utterly unmoved by scoffers and skeptics. To realize our Divine mission in this world, we must “raise our heads”: we must be proud, courageous, and utterly unfazed by ridicule from outside or cynicism from within.

—*Toras Menachem 5743, vol. 3, p. 1612*

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 5:7 | ז:ה
 

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וְהִתְנִידוּ אֶת חַטָּאתָם אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ

*They shall confess the sin they committed.*

## Holistic Healing

The Rambam writes in Sefer Hamitzvos:

The 73rd mitzvah is that we are commanded to verbally acknowledge the sins we have committed before G-d, exalted be He, when we repent from them... As the Torah states, “They shall confess the sin they committed.”

The Rambam mentions *teshuvah*, repentance, as the circumstance under which one can fulfill the mitzvah of verbal confession, but he does not enumerate *teshuvah* as a mitzvah unto itself. The absence of *teshuvah* from the Rambam’s list caused the later commentaries to wonder if repentance is actually an obligation. Does one fulfill a mitzvah by repenting, and neglect a mitzvah if he does not repent? If it *is* a mitzvah, why does the Rambam not list it among the 613?

One explanation is that although *teshuvah* is indeed a mitzvah, it is a general recommitment to all of G-d’s other commands. Since it does not entail any unique activity that is not included in the other mitzvos, the Rambam does not list it among the 613.

This idea reflects the inner meaning of *teshuvah* and its relationship with the other mitzvos. Our Sages explain that the 248 commandments and 365 prohibitions correspond to the 248 limbs and 365 sinews in the human body.<sup>3</sup> Chassidus

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3. See Talmud, Makkos 23b; Zohar 1:170b.

explains that the soul comprises 613 spiritual “limbs” or faculties, each corresponding to a particular mitzvah.<sup>4</sup> Any lack in the fulfillment of the one of the mitzvos causes a deficiency in the corresponding “limb” in one’s soul.<sup>5</sup>

Through *teshuvah*, however, the deficient limbs of the soul can be repaired. This is because *teshuvah*, which is motivated and characterized by a profound desire to reconnect with G-d, draws from the very essence of the soul, the source from which the individual limbs of the soul extend. *Teshuvah* thus breathes new life into *all* the limbs of the soul, restoring them to their proper “health.” Accordingly, it can be suggested that only mitzvos corresponding to a specific limb in the soul are enumerated in the 613, but not *teshuvah*, which stems from the essence of the soul and enlivens them all.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 38, pp. 18–23

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4. Tanya, chapter 4.

5. Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim 45c.

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 5:9 | ה:ט
 

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וְכָל תְּרוּמָה לְכָל קֹדֶשׁ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 אֲשֶׁר יִקְרִיבוּ לַכֹּהֵן לוֹ יִהְיֶה

*Every raised-offering of all the holy things  
 that the children of Israel bring to the Kohen,  
 it shall be his.*

## How to Give

Rashi explains that this verse teaches us that the Bikkurim are given to the Kohen. Elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> the Torah instructs us to bring Bikkurim, the first fruits of the season, to the Beis Hamikdash, the Holy Temple, but does not state what shall be done with the fruit afterward. The Torah tells us now, “to the Kohen, it shall be his”—the Bikkurim are divided among the Kohanim.

The Torah’s portrayal of Bikkurim as a two-step process, first requiring us to bring the new fruits to the Beis Hamikdash and then instructing us to leave them for the Kohanim, teaches us the approach we should adopt when it comes to giving *tzedakah*.

Bikkurim must be brought from fruits of the highest quality,<sup>7</sup> whose cultivation requires great effort and patience. The mitzvah to bring the very first of these fruits to the Temple demonstrates that when we chance upon an opportunity to give to charity, we must not hesitate to part with it as we consider how difficult it was for us to earn. Rather, we should

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6. Shemos 23:19.

7. See Mishneh Torah, Hil. Bikkurim 2:3.

readily give the first and finest of our earnings to a G-dly purpose—*tzedakah*.

The ultimate challenge, however, is not in contributing toward a holy or communal cause, but in giving the first of our earnings to the poor, for their personal benefit. We can rightfully argue: why is the next person more entitled to the first fruits of my labor than I am? I, too, am needy and deserving!

The mitzvah of Bikkurim shows us how to surmount this inner struggle: by bringing the new fruits to the Temple *before* giving them to the Kohen. Figuratively, this means to regard the first of our earnings as funds that already belong to charity. The process begins with “bringing the fruits to the Temple,” because the struggle of parting with our hard-earned money in favor of giving it to someone else exists only so long as we are parting with *our* possessions. Once we regard the funds as belonging to charity, giving them away becomes much easier.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 8, pp. 39–40



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 ה:יב | 5:12
 

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אִישׁ אִישׁ כִּי תִשָּׁטָה אִשְׁתּוֹ וּמָעַלָּה בּוֹ מַעַל

*A man whose wife strayed and was unfaithful to him.*

## Returning Shortly

A *sotah* is a married woman who is suspected of adultery and prohibited from being with her husband until she proves her innocence. The term *sotah* means “woman who strays,” and comes from the verse in the Torah, “A man whose wife strays (*sisteh*) and was unfaithful to him.” The word *shtus*, meaning foolishness or irrationality, stems from the same root. By using a term synonymous with foolishness to describe the *sotah*’s sin, the Torah teaches us that it is simply inconceivable that a Jew would transgress the Torah’s laws unless he or she is not thinking rationally.<sup>8</sup>

The Torah’s allusion to this principle in the context of the laws of a *sotah* also teaches us that, like a *sotah*, a Jew who is distant from G-d through “foolish” transgressions is in this state only temporarily. A *sotah* is not necessarily guilty of adultery; she is deemed a *sotah* simply because she behaved in a manner that allowed for suspicion. Such conduct is, in and of itself, immodest for a Jewish woman, and temporarily bars her from her normal married life. Once she drinks the miraculous “*sotah* waters,” however, and establishes her innocence, she returns to her husband and they continue living together. In fact, the Torah promises that her marriage will now be even more blessed than it was previously.<sup>9</sup> If she was barren, she

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8. See Talmud, Sotah 3a.

9. See Bamidbar 5:28.



will now conceive; if she gave birth painfully, she will now give birth with ease; if she used to give birth to unattractive children, she will now give birth to beautiful children.<sup>10</sup>

The same is true concerning the distance we put between ourselves and G-d when we sin. The Jewish people as a whole are regarded as G-d's "wife," which is why our conduct is of such significance to Him. Yet even when the foolishness of the *yetzer hara*, the evil inclination, gets the better of us, our distance from G-d is only temporary. Ultimately, every Jew will certainly do *teshuvah* and be cleared from sin, and our relationship with G-d will be renewed and enhanced.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, pp. 313–314

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10. See Talmud, Sotah 26a; Talmud Yerushalmi, Sotah 3:4.



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הנערה איידא תחי'  
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In honor of his yahrzeit on 5 Sivan, 5775

And in loving memory of  
**Ephraim Fishel ben Zev Wolf Kisin A"H**  
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