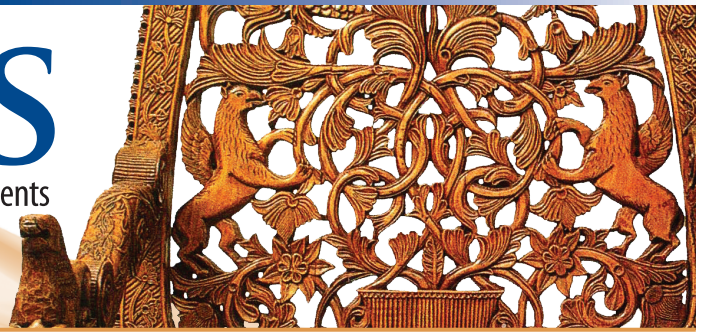


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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Striking It Rich

By Yossi Katz

WEALTH IS SOMETHING that most people spend their days dreaming about. But how does one actually become wealthy?

In 1999 the executive chairman of Google (then the CEO of Novell), Eric Schmidt, said in an interview with *Forbes*: “Lots of people who are smart and work hard and play by the rules don’t have a fraction of what I have.” Schmidt acknowledged that the scale of inequality generated by the new wealth “makes me uncomfortable.” Why? “I realize I don’t have my wealth because I’m so brilliant. Luck has a lot to do with it.”

Is that so? Does luck actually spur on accumulating great wealth? Perhaps it’s just plain old hard work and effort?

Wealth is generated by God. However, when wealth reaches this world, it is disbursed via two “bank accounts” called the “time account” and the “place account.” For example, there are seasons when a person is financially successful, and other times when business is simply dead. A person may do very well at one location and dreadful at another. This is all due to how Godly bounty is filtered down to our world.

Very often we mistakenly think, “What if He forgot about me this month?” We begin worrying and using all our mental faculties to brainstorm about how to salvage our predicament. We might even lower ourselves to doing backbreaking labor or various other unworthy tasks, all in the hope of making a few bucks. In reality, we’re just pushing the envelope while gaining nothing. God is ready, willing and able to help – but right now is either not the time or the place for His blessing. A little patience (and some prayer) is all that’s needed.

Our Rabbis also teach that in order to receive our personal “disbursement,” we must first create a “vessel” to hold our bounty. We create this vessel by dedicating effort toward earning a living. How much effort should we contribute? The Kotzker Rebbe once remarked that we were cursed with the words “By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). But there is no mitzvah to fulfill the curse with absolute dedication! Thankfully, even minimal effort satisfies this curse’s requirements.

This is why our *parashah* says, “HaShem your God will bless you in all that you do” (Deuteronomy 15:18). This implies that even if all you do is very little, still, you will be blessed.

But it goes even further. The source of wealth is God, and God is above time and place. By remembering and being faithful to the true Source of wealth while engaging in our efforts, we connect our work with the ultimate source of income and expedite the whole process. However, by worrying and overworking, we sink further into the restrictions of time and place and distance ourselves further from the Source, making things even more challenging and time-consuming.

Haven’t we all invested enormous effort into a project, thinking for certain we would succeed, only to be utterly disappointed? And haven’t we laughed at other, simpler efforts and then witnessed tremendous success? So why can’t we just sit back and enjoy the show?

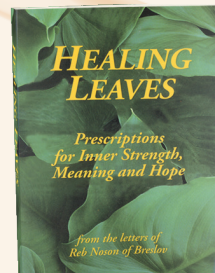
The secret ingredient to wealth is *bitachon* (trust in God). *Bitachon* is so great that one who has it need not make any other effort whatsoever! That being said, *bitachon* is our main vessel. The more we learn to trust in God, the more we can rely on His blessing and concentrate our lives on spiritual matters. For starters, we can begin by simply thanking God and remembering the many times He has helped until now. In this way, we will merit both material and spiritual wealth. *Amen!*

*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Ribis 3
A Gutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!*

HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell



I have some news for you: You should know that there is indeed a God controlling the world, reigning in the heavens above and on the earth below. He lives and endures forever; may His Name be praised for all eternity. (Letter #3)

True Breslovers

By Gedaliah Fleer

On his first trip to Israel as a teenager in 1958, Gedaliah Fleer was introduced to three leading Breslover chassidim who were living examples of Rebbe Nachman's teachings.

REB MOSHE BURSTEIN, a close disciple of Rabbi Avraham Sternhartz, was a true servant of God. Although he worked a full day in the Ministry of Religion, he devoted many hours to prayer and Torah study and only slept about three hours a night. Though Reb Moshe had studied the entire Talmud with Rabbi Sternhartz, he was not interested in publicizing the extent of his knowledge. He preferred to stay out of the limelight and to serve God with simplicity and joy. He was real and sincere, and his powerful simplicity made a deep impression on me, bringing me closer to the Chassidut.

Reb Gedaliah Kenig was renowned for his deep and encyclopedic knowledge of Breslov Chassidut and Kabbalah. He warmly invited us into his small, two-room home in Batei Wittenberg and offered us a cup of tea. The moment we were settled, he and Rabbi Tzvi Aryeh Rosenfeld delved into a discussion of some difficult points in the *Likutey Moharan*. I listened in fascination and realized that there was much more to Rebbe Nachman's teachings than I had assumed.

Reb Yitzchak Gelbach also had a deep, encyclopedic knowledge of the entire Talmud. He worked in the central post office and was very down-to-earth. He was in charge of the third Shabbat meal in the main Breslover shul and would personally set the tables and serve the food for the dozens of people who ate there each week.

While living in Lithuania under Soviet rule, Reb Yitzchak had published a ten-year calendar of the Jewish festivals so that people would be at least able to know when Yom Tov came out. He was caught by the Russians, who said to him, "You like ten-year calendars, so we're sentencing you to ten years in Siberia."

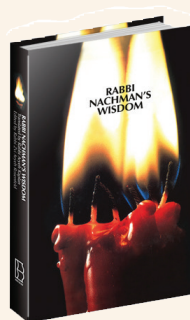
Reb Yitzchak told me many stories about how he managed to observe the Torah in a Siberian labor camp. One of his lungs was permanently damaged by the cold. But the harsh sentence actually saved his life, because shortly after he was sent to Siberia, the Nazis invaded Lithuania and decimated the Jewish population there.

From "Against All Odds: The Incredible Story of an American Chassid Who Broke Through the Iron Curtain to Reach Rebbe Nachman's Grave in Uman"

SIDEPATH

Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom translated by R. Aryeh Kaplan, zt"l

150. The Rebbe once said, "When I take money or something else from someone, I am really giving something to him. For my taking is actually giving." [This is related to the story of the sixth day in the tale of "The Seven Beggars," in which the beggar boasts of the wondrous power of his hands.]



151. The story of the sixth day was told very close to Pesach, and in my opinion, the ten walls of the water castle that are mentioned there are related to the Splitting of the Red Sea.

Each tale came to be told because of a conversation regarding current happenings in the world. A news item would contain some idea related to a story that the Rebbe

had in mind, and would lead him to tell the tale. The news would be the "awakening from below," drawing down an aspect of Godliness to be clothed in a particular tale.

In all this we saw the awesomeness of God and the greatness of the tzaddik, for whom everything in the world is Torah and a revelation of Godliness. But above all, we saw this in the tale of "The Seven Beggars." This story contains wondrous, awesome concepts without end; with some perception, you can see it for yourself. Read this story carefully. If you truly open your eyes and heart, you yourself will see the lofty teachings in each of the beggars' stories.



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The photo on the front is a close-up of Rebbe Nachman's chair, which is displayed in the main Breslov synagogue in Jerusalem.