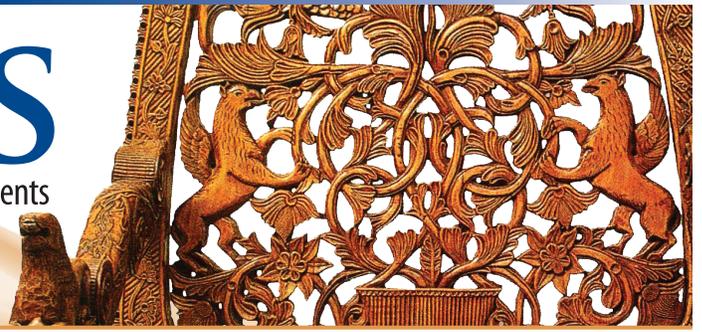


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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Redeeming Ourselves

By Yossi Katz

I WOKE UP THIS MORNING after another restless night. With an achy back, stuffy nose and aggressive cough, I wished I could stay in bed under the warm covers. After getting dressed and finally getting all the kids on their way, I opened the front door and was besieged by the freezing cold wind. I got into my frost-covered car and waited patiently as it heated up. Couldn't I live in a nice, warm climate, or at least be able to take some time off to relax in one? Why does life always have to be so difficult?

The Torah tells us, "Jacob lived in the Land of Egypt for 17 years" (Genesis 47:28). The *Zohar* asks, "Why does the Torah bother to single out the 17 years of Jacob dwelling in Egypt? Rabbi Shimon answered that Jacob had to deal with trouble all his life, and his days were troubled right from the beginning. When he saw Joseph standing before him, Jacob looked at Joseph and his soul was made whole as if he saw Joseph's mother. For the beauty of Joseph resembled that of Rachel, and it seemed to him [Jacob] as if he had never known any sorrow at all."

Could it be that these were the only 17 years that Jacob dwelled in happiness and satisfaction? Jacob had lived in the Holy Land—the place that was to be his eternal inheritance—and yet it was only in Egypt, an indecent land of future bondage and exile, that he found peace and harmony?

Sadness, depression, worries, anxiety—all these negative feelings originate from a spiritual blockage of sorts. It all started when Adam ate from the Tree. "The Lord God called to man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He replied, 'I heard Your Voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I am naked, so I hid'" (ibid., 3:9-10). By Adam's eating, something holy and elevated had become contaminated; it was now exiled and would have to be elevated and redeemed. This is true for us as well. Whether or not we are aware, we sometimes make certain decisions and head in a direction that is counterproductive to our spiritual potential. Our precious soul is now in a state of

exile; it is crying out and we feel this cry. But how do we redeem ourselves?

Joseph was the quintessential Tzaddik. The Torah calls him, "a man in whom there is the *ruach* (wind or spirit) of God" (ibid., 41:38). The Tzaddik blows away the ash covering the souls of the Jewish people, thereby dispelling their depression and inflaming their formerly smothered essence.

When Joseph was sold to Egypt, to the lowest pit on earth, our very essence, Jewish spirit and joy were completely exiled. But now that Jacob saw Joseph alive, it all made sense. Joseph had not been sold in vain, but in order to save his family by providing sustenance during the years of famine. Although the national exile of his descendants was only beginning, Jacob's exile had effectively ended. True, there would be times of great darkness and despair ahead, but by finding Joseph—the goodness and small joys in the darkness—one could begin to find a way out.

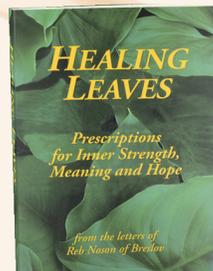
Yes, we all have difficult times, sadness and worries. But when we look for the goodness and experience joy even in troubled times, we begin to elevate our perceived purposeless issues and redeem them for the incredible opportunities of growth hidden beneath. We then restore our souls to their awesome purpose of unifying us with the greatest Source. Amen!

Based on Likutey Halakhot, Hodaah 6

HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell



Each person must search tirelessly and relentlessly for what he has lost [i.e., his perception and awareness of God's glory]. Even if he has not yet found anything at all, he has nonetheless found a great deal, just by the effort he has put into the search. (Letter #71)

Reb Noson's Last Will and Testament

By Yehudis Golshevsky

REBBE NACHMAN ONCE SAID of Reb Noson, "If not for Noson, not a shred of even one of page of my teachings would have been preserved!" The day of Reb Noson's passing, the tenth of Tevet, hints to the greatness of the task that he undertook. For the fast of the Tenth of Tevet commemorates not only the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem, but the passing of Ezra the Scribe.

It was Friday and Reb Noson was very ill. He asked those who were with him to read two of Rebbe Nachman's famous tales, "The Lost Princess" and "The King and the Emperor." In "The Lost Princess," the king's daughter disappears and his viceroy searches for a torturously long time until he finally finds her. He must release her from a "pearl castle on a golden mountain."

In "The King and the Emperor," the king's son is engaged to the emperor's daughter, but she is abducted before they can marry. The story describes her escape and how she contrives to become the ruler of a kingdom and bring back her long-lost fiancé. After rewarding those who suffered because of her, she turns to her fiancé and says, "Come! Let us go home!"

Reb Noson asked those who were with him to repeat these final words several times. Then he said, "It is my time to go home."

He spoke as if giving his last will and testament: "You must keep together and love one another. You are all good people, but you are *shlimazelniks*—unlucky!"

Suddenly Reb Noson said, "Three tragedies befell the Jewish people in the month of Tevet. What were they? Ezra the Scribe passed away, the Torah was translated into Greek in the time of King Ptolemy, and Jerusalem was besieged.

"When Ezra the Scribe leaves the world, and atheism and heresy engulf the world, as we find today, with false ideologies springing up in their thousands and myriads... still, I trust that even one page of Rebbe Nachman's writings will be enough to rectify everything! I therefore want to give you instructions. Your work will be to *print the Rebbe's books*, and 'Your wellsprings will flow outward' (Proverbs 5:16). Be strong—with money, willpower and effort!"

From "Through Fire and Water," pp. 542-543

SIDEPATH

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

186. We saw the Rebbe accurately predict the future in many cases. Once during the Ten Days of Repentance, the Rebbe said, "Heaven help us! There will be great illness this year." When he left the *mikvah* before Yom Kippur that year, he felt his head to see if he was still alive, out of apprehension of the impending illness. The Rebbe's prediction came true and many people became ill that year.



Another year, there was a serious inflation of prices. When there was a good wheat crop that summer, people thought that prices would go down. But the Rebbe said that prices would not go down and that the inflation would last for two years. The Rebbe's prediction came true.

If you look carefully into the Rebbe's words, you will see that he knew what was going to happen even in the very distant future. Still,

everything was well-concealed and hidden.

187. One of the Rebbe's followers had a serious ailment in his arm. He had his arm in a sling and was totally unable to lower it. The man was sitting at the Rebbe's table for the Shabbat morning meal. The Rebbe remarked that the man certainly had faith, and all those sitting there agreed. Suddenly the Rebbe commanded the man, "Lower your arm!"

His follower removed the man's sling and the latter instantly lowered his arm. He was totally healed and it was an obvious miracle. He regained full use of his arm and it remained healthy for the rest of his life.



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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.