

PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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Search for Your Treasure

By Yossi Katz

REBBE NACHMAN TOLD a tale:

A man once dreamed that there was a great treasure under a bridge in Vienna. He traveled to Vienna and stood near the bridge, trying to figure out what to do. He did not dare search for the treasure by day, because of the many people who were there.

An officer passed by and asked, “What are you doing, standing here and contemplating?” The man decided that it would be best to tell the whole story and ask for help, hoping that [the officer] would share the treasure with him. He told the officer the entire story.

The officer replied, “A Jew is concerned only with dreams! I also had a dream, and I also saw a treasure. It was in a small house, under the cellar.”

In relating his dream, the officer accurately described the man’s city and house. The man rushed home, dug under his cellar, and found the treasure. He said, “Now I know that I had the treasure all along. But in order to find it, I had to travel to Vienna” (Rabbi Nachman’s Parables, “The Treasure”).

Each of us possesses an amazing treasure whose incredible preciousness constantly gnaws at us. Often we misinterpret this subconscious yearning to finally discover our treasure. We confuse it with making lots of money, or seeking great honor, but it never goes away. It chases us to Vienna...

While in Vienna, the man was so certain of discovering his sought-after treasure that he would not dare retrieve it in broad daylight. This led him to include the officer on his “team.” But the officer also had a dream, a very different dream. In the officer’s dream, the man’s treasure was buried right under his own house.

The officer would seem to represent the Tzaddik. Often we come to the Tzaddik misguided, thinking that something really big is waiting for us as the result of

some passionate pursuit of ours. However, the Tzaddik knows us for what we really are. He teaches us that this is really our *neshamah* (soul) calling for true meaning, and he sends us home! We return home only to realize that our treasure was waiting for us the whole time. Were our travels in vain? Did we waste our “miles” and time? No! Many times, it’s necessary to run halfway across the world before we realize that we have overlooked the most obvious of answers. Life is a journey, but by finding the Tzaddik, we can finally be rerouted in the correct direction.

This week’s *parashah* states, “You should place these words of Mine on your hearts” (Deuteronomy 11:18).

The Hebrew word *veSaMtem* (you should place) is similar to *SaM* (potion). Our Sages interpret this to mean that the words of the Torah have two potentials: to be an elixir of healing and life, or a potion of death (*Yoma* 72b). Even our holy Torah, the source of true spirituality and holiness, can cause death. This is truly shocking! So many of us think that Torah is Torah, and no matter what, it can only help and do no harm. This is very wrong. There are times when Torah teachings can actually be harmful. A common example is when one studies with the intention of finding the Torah “gems” associated with someone else’s *neshamah*.

The verse tells us to place these words on *our* hearts. We are all unique individuals; we all must find our way and our own unique interpretation and personal message in the Torah.

“You shall fear the Lord your God, serve Him, and attach yourself to Him” (Deuteronomy 10:20) How do we attach ourselves to God? Our Sages teach that by attaching ourselves to true Torah scholars, we will discover God! (*Ketuvot* 111b). Only when we study with the true Tzaddik as our personal teacher can we be directed to find our individual treasure and personal understanding of the Torah.

Based on Likutey Halakhot, Minchah 6

Who Was “The Deutschel”? (Part 2)

By Yehudis Golshevsky

THE NEXT DAY’S feast mirrored the first. Reb Yechiel’s eldest brother rose midway through the meal to share words of Torah. Mid-speech, however, Reb Yechiel stood before him and passed a hand before his face. The firstborn began to confess a litany of past sins until his words dried up.

Reb Yechiel’s second brother got up to speak, but the same thing happened. The scene repeated itself with the rest of the brothers. Reb Yechiel then began to share the deepest teachings of Chassidut along with stories about the Baal Shem Tov and his holy disciples. “The Deutschel” spent the rest of his stay answering questions about the path of Chassidut, and took his leave to return to Mezhibuzh for Rosh HaShanah.

En route, his ship was struck by a storm wind and it was only through his prayers that they survived the ordeal. The storm lasted weeks, blowing them off course. Reb Yechiel stepped onto the shore of a strange stretch of land on Erev Rosh Hashanah.

The people there had never seen a Jew, and Reb Yechiel immediately sought a hut along the beach and some basic provisions for the Day of Judgment. All alone and watched by people who thought he was crazy, Reb Yechiel poured out his heart in prayer. When it came time to blow the shofar, the natives fled in fear...but the king of that place heard and was intrigued. He came to check on the strange visitor, and Reb Yechiel said he would visit the following night.

At their meeting, the king questioned Reb Yechiel about his faith, and he answered wisely. The king said, “I would like you to bring three hundred of your people to settle here!”

Reb Yechiel answered, “Gracious king, I have no power to force anyone to join me here. But I can tell you that if the Creator wanted them here, He would send them in chains, if necessary.”

The following day Reb Yechiel began the journey back to Mezhibuzh. When he arrived, the Baal Shem Tov greeted him and said, “That land was filled with many holy sparks awaiting liberation, and your prayers and shofar blasts accomplished the work. Had you not been sent there, three hundred Jews would have had to go there in chains in order to effect the necessary spiritual rectifications!”

Based on Or HaOrot I, pp. 228-241

SIDEPATH

Advice (Likutey Etzot) translated by Avraham Greenbaum

EATING. 13. Greed for food is one of the three lusts that destroy the heart’s capacity for awe and reverence for God. The other two are the desire for wealth and the sexual appetite. Each of the Three Festivals has its own spiritual influence that counters one of these desires. Pesach counters the desire for wealth, Shavuot the sexual impulse, and Sukkot the greedy desire for food (*Likutey Moharan II, 1:4, 5*).



14. The food one eats can affect his dreams and even cause him to have a “dream sent by a demon” (*Berakhot 55b*). This can bring about a wasteful emission. The *tikkun* for this is to be always happy (*ibid. II, 5:10*).

15. One of the highest of all spiritual experiences is the revelation of Desire which comes at the time of eating. But before one can attain this level, he must find a wise sage for a teacher, someone who possesses the wisdom of how to awaken the radiant light of the Jewish People. If a person finds such a sage and is firm and disciplined in his own spiritual path, he will be able to experience this revelation of holy Desire when he eats. This Desire is boundless, beyond all understanding. He scarcely knows what it is he desires. It is pure Desire — the yearning of the soul for God (*ibid. II, 7:10*).



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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.