

PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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Rest Assured

By Yossi Katz

THERE IS A four-letter word in the English language that lingers at our side constantly, seeking to drain us of our sanity and quality of life: work.

Much of society lives from one vacation to another, counting the days until they can finally take their mind off this most pressing “need” and enjoy some rest, relaxation and fun. Ever since we were polluted by the venom of the Serpent, mankind has been saddled with this nagging pressure. However, there is a better way to live. It’s called Shabbat.

Our *parashah* states, “Work shall be done during the six weekdays, but the seventh day will be holy for you; it is a complete rest for God” (Exodus 35:2). The phrasing “work *shall be done*” implies that through keeping Shabbat, our work can actually be done for us! This is because our keeping Shabbat creates a source of bounty that flows to the six workdays of the week. Our resting on Shabbat actually fuels the success of our work during the week.

The Torah therefore states about God Himself, “With the Seventh Day, God completed His work that He had done” (Genesis 2:2). What in Creation was lacking that God needed to complete? Our Rabbis answer that the only thing missing was rest. God therefore created the Shabbat, which includes rest, and Creation was finally complete. We now see that God’s very own work was brought to fruition only through rest.

Although resting may seem counterintuitive to prospering, there is actually good reason behind this. We translated the word in the verse above, *VaYichal*, as “completed”; in other sources, the root of this word means “to desire.” Accordingly, the verse also tells us that on Shabbat, God desires the work that is done during the six workdays. This phenomenon is known as *HaArat HaRatzon*, “the illumination of desire.” On Shabbat, God illuminates us with an awesome desire for spirituality and closeness to Him.

Imagine experiencing a blinding and piercing light so powerful that the physical world becomes null. This light expresses God’s will and desire in giving us bounty and His interaction with this world. The more we rest on Shabbat by infusing our thoughts and actions with faith in God, the more we experience the illuminations of His desire and perceive His hand and His blessings in every facet of our lives.

The bite of the Serpent had the opposite effect. It convinced us that everything is up to us and is our responsibility. Only we can bring about our ultimate success and we must therefore work until we have nothing left in the tank. Therefore the verse says, “Work shall be done during the six weekdays.” Work is defined as the 39 Types of Labor that were involved in the construction of the Tabernacle; these forms of labor are prohibited on Shabbat. Only through resting on Shabbat are all these 39 types of work blessed and brought to fruition. King David explains, “He prepares dew for the land...He does not desire the strength of a horse, nor the muscles of man; God desires those who fear Him” (Psalms 147:8, 10-11).

Rashi explains that although we were already commanded regarding the Shabbat, the Torah repeats the command here, before the command to build the Tabernacle, lest we think that building the Tabernacle supersedes resting on Shabbat. Although the illumination of desire enlightens us to the extent that we realize all of our work is brought to fruition only through God, still, on Shabbat we can reach an even higher level. Through resting properly on Shabbat, it is possible to become absolutely nullified to the extent that we experience only Godliness and every other act is trivial and naught. Only by first reaching these spiritual heights can we later extend this perception to the six workdays, to finally live all week long with God’s blessing and bounty. Amen!

Based on Likutey Halakhot, Shabbat 3

Trust in God

REB NACHMAN TULCHINER would recall the greatness of Reb Noson and how even while he was extremely poor, one could see no difference in his facial expression even after he finally received some money. However, after he prayed, the difference was obvious. One could see a different face!

Once, two days before Pesach, Reb Noson's daughter Chana Tzirel complained to him that it was almost Pesach and their house was empty. Reb Noson said to her, "My dear daughter, God will help!"

And so it was. God helped and a Breslover Chassid who lived far away became inspired to support Reb Noson. He thought to himself, "Who knows if Reb Noson has all his needs for Pesach?" He immediately filled his wagon with every necessity – potatoes, eggs, and every other Pesach item – and brought them to Reb Noson the day before the holiday.

During the Pesach Seder, Reb Noson was constantly thanking God for not abandoning them and granting their every need. In the middle of expressing his gratitude, he told his daughter, "When I said that God would help, I did not in any way mean that this Breslover Chassid would be my source of help." Rather, Reb Noson placed his trust solely in God, knowing that one way or another, He would provide.

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Once Reb Noson overheard a Breslover Chassid complaining about how it was almost Pesach and he had nothing for the holiday. The Chassid said, "From where can I take [what I need] for Pesach?"

Reb Noson consoled him, "For Pesach, you will have what you need. But how do we grab on to the essence of Pesach itself?"

* *

Another time, when Reb Noson had nothing for Pesach, he observed how people began filling the barrels with water for the holiday. He began to dance with great joy and exclaimed, "Thank God! We already have water for the holiday!"

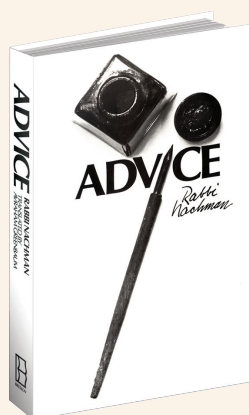
Based on Otzar Nachmeini, pp. 16-17

SIDEPATH

Advice (Likutey Etzot) translated by Avraham Greenbaum

THE COVENANT. 50. One who breaks his sexual desire, and cleanses and purifies his mind, is worthy of dreams sent by an angel. Then he is worthy of the status of Man. But a person whose mind is impure receives dreams from a demon and resembles a beast (*Likutey Moharan I, 5:9*).

51. Rabbis and judges who are dishonest and pervert the law cause the filth of nocturnal pollutions. The perversion of the "thrones of judgment" (Psalms 122:5) causes the love that is in the Chariot (the Throne) to fall, and stirs up the heat of impure passion. The remedy for this is "Binding the Chariot" – a



reference to the institution of the Sages that before we go to sleep we should say, "In the name of the Lord God of Israel: at my right, Michael, at my left, Gavriel, before me, Uriel and behind me, Rafael, and upon my head, the Presence of God" (*Likutey Moharan I, 5:11*).

52. The spiritual powers of the mind and the soul are the shield against sexual desire. Each of the three main facets of

the mind is a separate barrier against this impulse. The power of the sexual impulse derives from the "spirit of folly" which overwhelms one with lustful thoughts and fantasies. As soon as a person feels threatened by them, he should remind himself of the intrinsic superiority of the spiritual realm (*ibid. I, 8:2*).



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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.