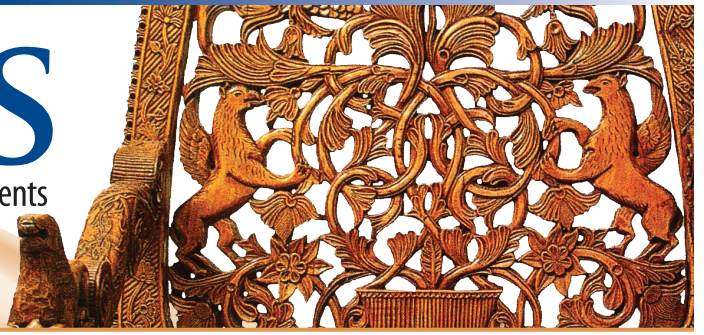


# PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

PARASHAT TAZRIA-METZORA • 5777 • VOL. 8 NO. 25

📧 [breslov.org/pathways](http://breslov.org/pathways)



## Hide and Seek

By Yossi Katz

**OUR PARASHAH COMMANDS** us regarding the mitzvah that is most identified with our Jewishness: “On the eighth day, his foreskin should be circumcised” (Leviticus 12:3). Contemplating the nature of this mitzvah, an obvious question arises: If the foreskin is extra, why wait until the eighth day to remove it? Better yet, why is the baby born with it in the first place?

In *Likutey Moharan* II, 78, Rebbe Nachman explains that everything in our universe was created by the Ten Utterances of God. For example, “In the beginning, God created the Heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). The *Zohar* links these Ten Utterances to the Ten Commandments of the Torah. Accordingly, every part of creation has an element of Torah hidden inside, which gives that creation its vitality.

Yet the Torah was not given to mankind until 26 generations after Creation. Since the world was created for the purpose of the Torah and its mitzvot, how did the universe sustain itself for those 26 generations? Rebbe Nachman answers that the Hidden Torah – a treasury of unearned gifts – sustained the world even when the fulfillment of its purpose was lacking. But this raises another question: Why wasn’t the Torah given right away? Why did God want us to rely on His treasury of unearned gifts for so long?

When you want to eat a fruit, you usually have to peel away the hard, undesirable shell to reach the sweetness inside. Similarly, in spiritual matters, there is an outer, difficult shell that must be peeled away before one can get to the sweetness. Had God created the world and given the Torah right away, He would have given us a revealed spiritual existence in which actual holiness was exposed and obvious. Even in such a reality, we would still have had freedom of choice, because without it, there would be no reward or punishment,

and the fulfillment of mitzvot would serve no challenge. But we know, “There is not a Tzaddik on earth that does only good and does not err” (Ecclesiastes 7:20). And certainly, mankind would have found it too difficult to remain at this level untainted. Since the Torah was given in such an exposed fashion, any deviation from it would be considered the greatest insult, worthy of destroying creation.

God therefore did us the greatest kindness by creating a world in which His Will (encapsulated as the Torah) is hidden in each part of creation. In this way, He forced us into an existence where we would have to break the outer shell of everything we experience in order to reach the inner fruit. And since we would have to find the merit and vitality to exist in the meanwhile, He created His treasury of unearned gifts so we would be sustained by the Torah vitality that is hidden in all of creation. He understood that our lives would be a work in progress, with many ups and downs, and therefore created the perfect system to give us the room we need to find Him.

Our most difficult and important challenge is attaining sexual purity. There is no greater base desire or temptation. The Torah itself is called a *brit* (covenant), which demonstrates the mammoth importance of this goal. It would therefore seem that there is no place for one who breaks the *brit*. God therefore created a baby boy with (the peel of) extra foreskin, which only increases these desires. This demonstrates that even during these eight days of temptation, God still sustains the person out of His lovingkindness. Even if the person sins later in life, God forbid, he is always able to remember this earlier time when God sustained him in His impure state through the Hidden Torah. With this knowledge, he can always pick himself up and continue searching, until he will finally reach the revelation of Torah. Amen!

*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Milah 3*

# An Honest Man

By Yehudis Golshevsky

**WHILE MANY PEOPLE** are aware of the great emphasis Rebbe Nachman placed on sanctifying one's intimate life, few realize that financial integrity was no less important to him. Time and again, Rebbe Nachman cried out about the need to be scrupulous in our financial dealings. Breslovers – who mainly lived plain and simple financial lives – certainly spoke about everyday acts of petty infidelity that people easily fall into, not big offenses like theft or embezzlement. Rebbe Nachman explicitly outlined the terrible spiritual consequences of such sins – that encroaching on another person's property can trigger illicit thoughts and cause him to lose a *shidduch*, for example (*Likutey Moharan I*, 69).

Breslover chassidim were always exceedingly careful with other people's money. Even when they saw legal loopholes that would have allowed them to take more than their due, or default on a loan, they did not resort to them.

Rabbi Avraham Sternfeld moved to America and, like many observant Jews, went into business. That way he could make his own hours and set aside time for Divine service. He was a fairly successful businessman who worked hard and was known to be honest. Unfortunately, he made some failed investments, even though they were perfectly aboveboard and should have made money. And Rabbi Avraham didn't only lose his own money in the crash; vast sums of borrowed money were also lost.

Since everyone knew it was not Rabbi Avraham's fault, the investors gave up on ever seeing a penny of their money. Rabbi Avraham was known to be exceedingly upright, though, and after some time he found other investors and continued doing business. He was successful again and, like many others who had gone bankrupt, he slowly rebuilt his capital.

Rabbi Avraham's first set of investors was surprised several years later when he asked for a repayment plan for the vast sum of money that he owed. When people expressed their admiration, he would say, "I am a Breslover. Rebbe Nachman taught that one must be absolutely honest in financial matters. Even though they didn't expect to be repaid, I felt that as a Breslover, it wouldn't be correct to renege on even one penny that I borrowed."

*Based on Siach Sarfey Kodesh VII:174*

## SIDEPATH

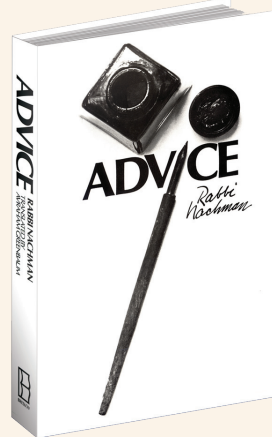
*Advice (Likutey Etzot) translated by Avraham Greenbaum*

**CHILDREN.** 10. It is best for children if you leave them alone for the most part rather than sticking to them and playing with them constantly. Don't be overly attentive to them. Do what you have to in order to give them their religious education, and train them in mitzvot when they reach the appropriate age. But don't play with them too much (*Rebbe Nachman's Wisdom* #59).

11. If you are joyous, it can protect your children from death (*ibid.* #65).

**TRUST.** 1. Those with deep trust in God are the "organs of conception and birth," as it were. Everything that is born in this world, all the blessings that flow into it, comes about through trust. The way to develop trust is through listening to the stories of the Tzaddikim.

There are many people who sleep away their days. The way to arouse them is by showing them the radiance of Torah. But because they are asleep, it could be damaging to expose them to the full light of Torah too suddenly. The Tzaddikim veil the wisdom of the Torah in stories which have the power to arouse those who are asleep (*Likutey Moharan I*, 60:6-8).



**BRESLOV  
RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE**

**breslov.org**

PO Box 5370 • Jerusalem, Israel • 972.2.582.4641

PO Box 587 • Monsey, NY 10952 • 1.800.33.BRESLOV

*Pathways* is a weekly publication. To subscribe, please visit [breslov.org/pathways](http://breslov.org/pathways). To make a dedication, please email [pathways@breslov.org](mailto:pathways@breslov.org).

© 2017 Breslov Research Institute

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