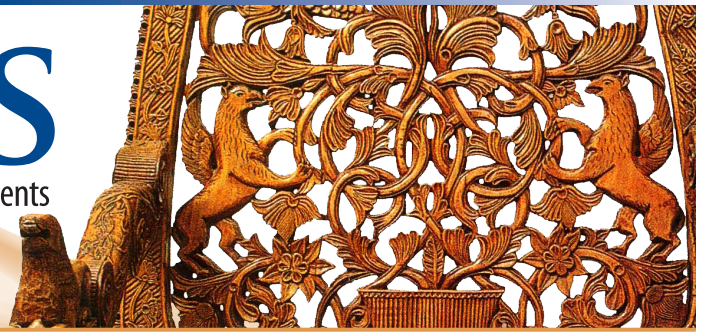


# PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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## Fight to the Finish

By Ozer Bergman

**K**orach, the greatest member of the tribe of Levi, desired the position of *kohen gadol* (high priest). He fomented a rebellion against Moshe Rabbeinu (our teacher), by claiming that Moshe Rabbeinu had appointed his brother Aharon as *kohen gadol* on his own initiative and not by divine fiat (as Moshe Rabbeinu claimed). Those who actively sided with Korach were punished when the earth opened up and swallowed them alive (Numbers 16).

Does the struggle against the *yetzer hara* (evil urge/inclination) ever end? Rebbe Nachman writes:

“There are many, many levels of *yetzer hara*. Some people are coarse, physical types. Their *yetzer hara* is also coarse and physical. For the majority of people, the *yetzer hara* is their own hot-bloodedness... In truth, though, one with even a bit of *da'at* (awareness) recognizes that such a [hot-blooded] *yetzer hara* is foolishness and insanity... There is, however, a *yetzer hara* that is a holy angel... One must overpower it. One needs very much to be saved from it. This *yetzer hara* is an aspect of *gevurot/dinim* (severities/judgments). One with *da'at* has such a *yetzer hara* and must overcome it, to sweeten the judgments, so that everything will be totally good, for one who is aware of the Infinite knows that everything is good...”

This information is crucial for understanding a number of baffling episodes in the Torah, such as the sin of the golden calf (Exodus 32) and the rebellion of Korach. The Jews after the revelation were no longer infected by the *zuhamat hanachash* (pollution of the Serpent), and they had experienced the highest level of prophecy possible and still made a golden calf?! Yes, because no matter how high a level a person achieves, s/he is still accompanied by a matching evil inclination.

(In a similar vein, the Rebbe once remarked: The world makes a mistake. They think that a *groisa mensch* [literally, a “great person”—i.e., a Torah sage and tzaddik] can't make a mistake. It's not so. Such a person can make a mistake. The mistake is a mistake and the *groisa mensch* is still a *groisa mensch*.)

So, no matter how high a level of awareness you will achieve, you will still have to struggle. If a person fails to realize this, as Korach did, s/he's in trouble, God forbid. Because the smug feeling of “I know what Judaism is about” leads one to think that there is no difference between him and Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon HaKohen. And if so, why should Moshe Rabbeinu decide who should be the *kohen gadol* and who not, what is a mitzvah and what not?

This Korachdik mistake is fatal, for this world and the next. It causes one to forget that God and the Torah are, in fact, infinite, ultimately beyond human comprehension. And because God is Infinite, the struggle to do His will, to nullify your ego to Him, is endless. And because the Torah contains infinite wisdom, we are *all* obligated to comply with its commands. Even Moshe Rabbeinu, who knew the Kabbalistic intentions and meditations of each mitzvah, knew that compared to God's infinite wisdom, there was more, much more, to each mitzvah.

May Hashem help us to struggle successfully against the *yetzer hara* and grow in humility. Amen!

*Based on Likutey Moharan I, 72; Likutey Halakhot, Hilkhos Shiluach Hakein 4:8-11*

*A Gutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!*

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## HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell



Sadness, depression, anxieties and doubts are highly damaging and are more destructive, God forbid, than one's wrongdoing. Listen to me, my dear son, because these are the words of our holy and awesome Rebbe. Fortify yourself again and again; begin anew every day. Do not dwell on any doubts or depression – pay them no attention at all. Do not give in! (Letter #9)

# Rebbe Nachman's Torah

Compiled by Chaim Kramer

*In one of the most dramatic episodes in the Torah, the earth "opened its mouth and swallowed" Korach and his cohorts (Numbers 16:32). Our Sages tell us that Korach and his allies are granted a reprieve from their punishment in Gehinnom every Rosh Chodesh – a day that is the source of repentance. As we celebrate Shabbat Rosh Chodesh, let us look into Rebbe Nachman's teaching on the subject.*

Rabbah bar bar Chanah recounted: This merchant said to me, "Come, I will show you those swallowed up with Korach." I went and saw two cracks from which fumes were coming out. He took a ball of wool and washed it in water. Then he put it on the head of his spear and inserted it there. When he removed it, it was scorched entirely. He said to me, "Listen! What do you hear?" I heard them saying, "Moses and his Torah are true, and we are false." He said to me, "Once every thirty days [on Rosh Chodesh; Rashbam], Gehinnom brings them back to here, like meat in a pot. And this is what they say, that Moses and his Torah are true and they are false" (*Bava Batra 74a*).

Rosh Chodesh is the source of repentance, for on that day, God Himself "repents" for having diminished the size of the moon (see *Chullin 60b*).

All creatures experience a "thought" of repentance on Rosh Chodesh, much as they do on Rosh HaShanah. Thus, even Korach and his followers must feel some remorse on

*All creatures experience a "thought" of repentance on Rosh Chodesh.*

Rosh Chodesh. However, repentance for misdeeds is only applicable in this world, when one is still alive. Therefore every thirty days, when Korach and his followers feel remorse and confess their mistake, admitting that "Moses and his Torah are true, and we are false," God is merciful and allows Gehinnom to bring them back to this world. They are not absolved of their sin, but every Rosh Chodesh they are allowed to repent.

Similarly, anyone who feels remorse and shame for having sinned against God is, to some extent, experiencing Gehinnom in this world. This counters the haughtiness and pride that made him sin in the first place. His repentance causes God's Presence to be revealed even more, which is the essence of all repentance (*Likutey Moharan I, 10:9*).

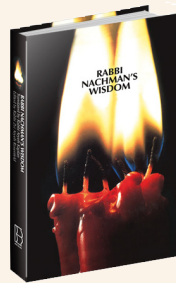
## SIDEPATH

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

37. Atheism is called a burden.

On the verse, "How can I alone bear your encumbrance and your burden?" (Deuteronomy 1:12), Rashi explains that "burden" refers to the fact that there were nonbelievers among the Jews in the desert.

When a person travels to a tzaddik, he casts aside this heavy burden, because traveling to a tzaddik is an act of faith, the opposite of unbelief.



38. It is written, "They have set their mouth against Heaven, and their tongue walks about the earth" (Psalms 73:9).

Now that atheism has spread, "the cord is untied" (Vayikra Rabbah 28:1; Zohar III, 177b) for the people to speak against every tzaddik and God-fearing person.

Those who do this, unleash their tongue against the world as if they think nothing of it at all. Actually, their unbelief is directed against God Himself. But they are ashamed to speak out against God, so they turn their unbelief against people.

This is the meaning of the verse. "They have set their mouth against Heaven"—for they are actually speaking against God. But they act as if "their tongue walks about the earth." Since they are ashamed to speak out against God Himself, "their tongue walks about the earth"—they unleash their tongue against God's followers in the world. But the truth is that "they have set their mouth against Heaven."



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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.*