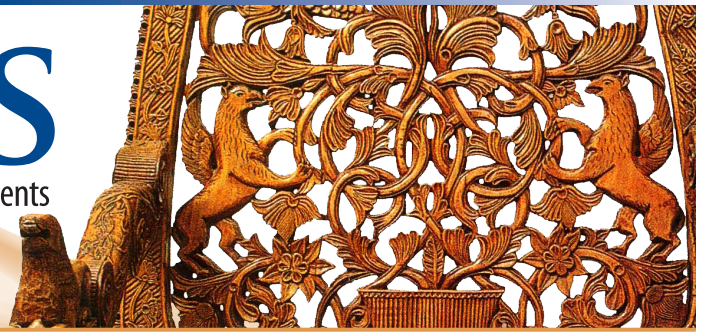


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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Don't Let Differences Divide Us

By Ozer Bergman

Moshe Rabbeinu (Moses our Teacher) asked Hashem, “Provide for the people a leader, someone who has the spirit of God within him” (Numbers 27:16). What is meant by “someone who has the spirit of God within him”? One who knows how to deal with each and every individual (Rashi on vv. 16, 18).

The Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple) is destroyed and we are in exile. This is what we are mourning in this three-week period. Our Sages teach that this sad state of affairs was brought about by *sinat chinam*, baseless hatred (*Yoma* 9a). This isn't limited to petty jealousy – our baseless hatred has a good reason! So we think. We have a tendency to be divisive, because when we see people conducting themselves somewhat differently from ourselves, we think, “They're not acting for the sake of Heaven.”

Rebbe Nachman said about the disciples of the Baal Shem Tov (founder of Chassidism): “There was tremendous harmony among them all, even though each one conducted himself differently. One would travel around giving public lectures, another would stay at home. One would lead the prayer service and pray at great length, loudly, with much gesticulating. Another would say the prayers quickly, sitting with the other members of the minyan. One would devote a great amount of time to Torah study, while another would be particularly involved with raising charity. All these differences, despite the fact that they all studied and were nurtured by the same teacher.”

Why did their conduct differ so? Reb Noson explains that because God never makes or does the same thing twice, each disciple had a different soul-root and a different personality make-up. This is equally true of each of us. When we get along well, we each give a different color to Judaism. This what God means when He says, “Jews – I beautify Myself with you” (Isaiah 49:3). But the *yetzer hara* undermines our faith and our harmony, transforming our differences into weapons of hate.

How can we maintain a peaceful outlook with our fellow Jews? Reb Noson suggests that we tell ourselves the following:

“I know that I am doing what I'm doing truly for the sake of Heaven. Even though my friend is actively deterring me, he, too, is doing it for the sake of Heaven. He's got a different opinion and thinks that what I'm doing is not a mitzvah, or that some other mitzvah should be done instead. But I'm certain that what I'm doing is right, and I can prove it! Nonetheless, even if the truth is on my side, who knows from what spiritual root my friend comes? Maybe, according to that root, he has to behave differently.”*

To attain this level, Reb Noson says, we must connect ourselves with the greatest tzaddik of the generation, who fills the role of Moshe Rabbeinu. The root of Moshe's soul is in the *Raava d'Raavin* (Will of Wills). Such a tzaddik knows the will of each individual and how to attach that individual's will to God's Will; thus, he is “a person who knows how to deal with each and every individual.” By instilling faith within us, he helps us make peace with one another.

God! Help each and every one of us find this tzaddik so that we may merit to see the arrival of the Righteous Redeemer, soon, in our lifetime. Amen!

* This does not mean condoning behavior that contradicts the standards and norms of the Torah. It does mean that we have to assume that others are well-meaning in their interpretation of Judaism unless we know otherwise. This is how Pinchas reacted to Zimri's provocation (Numbers 25:6-8, 10-15).

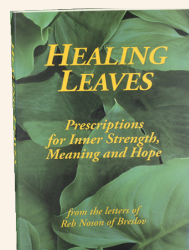
*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Hilkhot Shomer Sakhar 2:10-11
A Gutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!*

This is a reprint

HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell



“Cast your burden upon God and He will sustain you” (Psalms 55:23). A person must take his burdens, his cares – in fact, everything that weighs on his heart and mind – and cast them all onto God. (Letter #64)

Rebbe Nachman's Torah

Compiled by Chaim Kramer

In this week's *parashah*, the righteous daughters of Tzelaphchad come before Moses to claim their father's inheritance in the Land of Israel.

“The daughters of Tzelaphchad the son of Cheipher, the son of Makhir, the son of Manasseh, from the family of Manasseh the son of Joseph, approached” (Numbers 27:1).

The Torah traces the genealogy of the daughters of Tzelaphchad back to Joseph, who loved the Land so much that he swore his brothers to bring his bones there for burial after they left Egypt. Because they also desired a portion in the Land, these righteous descendants of Joseph merited to introduce this Torah passage detailing the laws of inheritance (Rashi).

Children provide the main rectification for the souls of their parents. By inheriting what their parents leave behind, children continue their parents' work and connect future generations with past generations, all the way back to the time of Adam. When Adam ate from the Tree, he blemished his descendants. We are the rectification for him and for all succeeding generations (*Likutey Halakhot* III, p. 236a-472).

*

“The daughters of Tzelaphchad speak well... Pass their father's inheritance over to them” (Numbers 27:7).

God designated channels through which bounty flows to the world. These channels can be opened by prayer. Rebbe Nachman explains that prayer is similar to a birthright (*Likutey Moharan* I, 2). Just as prayer opens channels to bring forth bounty, children have the power to continue drawing that bounty. If one has no heirs, his channels of bounty are closed. Therefore the Torah offers laws of inheritance to ensure that the channels of bounty remain open (see *Likutey Halakhot* VIII, p. 101b).

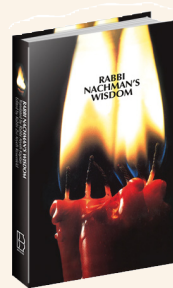
For the same reason, the Torah describes how relatives can redeem their unfortunate brethren who have descended into servitude to non-Jews (see Leviticus 25:47-54). Uncles, cousins and other relatives represent the channels of bounty that can help a person turn himself around and receive bounty directly (*ibid.*, VIII, p. 102a).

SIDEPATH

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

44. The Rebbe often spoke about the importance of names. He also discussed the biblical verses beginning and ending with the same letter as one's name, which are customarily said before the line “*Yehiyu le-ratzon*” at the end of the *Amidah*.

He once said that he could explain the mystical meaning of the names of all those standing around him, and he spoke most about R' Shimon (his first disciple). He said, “Take the letters *Shin, Mem, Ayin, Vav, Nun* (*ShiMON*), and rearrange them. You then have *AVoN MaSh* (away with sin)” (Zechariah 3:9).



The Rebbe would not discuss this further. R' Shimon was one of his favorite disciples, and the Rebbe said that this rearrangement literally described his essence.

He also said, “Do not be led astray by questions of how a name can contain the secret of a person's existence when so many people share the same name. Do not even refer to such things.”

From what the Rebbe said, we understood that every aspect of a person's essence is defined by some combination of the letters of his name. We also were able to realize that the Rebbe himself had complete knowledge of this.

The Rebbe said, “The permutation of letters can teach us great lessons. My teachings are very great, but where they involve these letter-permutations, they are even greater.”



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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.