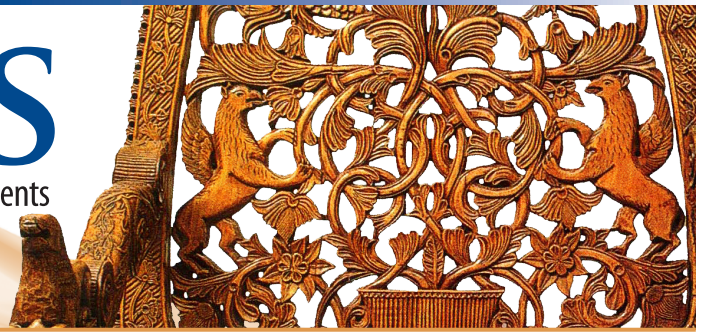


# PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

PARASHAT EIKEV • 5773 • VOL. 3 NO. 43

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



## When a Little is a Lot

By Ozer Bergman

“It will come to pass, if you will hear (*im shamoa*) and listen (*tishma'u*)...” (Deuteronomy 11:13).

This week's *parashah* contains the second paragraph of the Shema. Our Sages refer to this passage as *kabbalat ol mitzvot*, accepting upon oneself the yoke of complying with the Torah and mitzvot. Rashi explains: *Im shamoa*—if you listened [to the Torah in the past], then *tishma'u*—you will be able to hear and listen to new perceptions of Godliness [in the future].

The passage promises the Jews that they will be blessed if they perform the mitzvot. Conversely, it lists several misfortunes for which they will be liable should they be derelict in mitzvah performance. One of those misfortunes is “you will be banished from the Land...” (ibid., v. 17).

Regarding the destruction of the First Temple, the prophet Jeremiah delivered a message from God: “Why was the Land lost...?” (Jeremiah 9:11). Our Sages teach that this question was posed to the wise men and prophets of that generation, but they had no answer. God Himself had to provide it: “Because they abandoned My Torah.” That is, the Jews did not recite the blessings on the mitzvah of Torah study before they studied (*Bava Metzia* 85b).

The inability of the wise men and prophets to answer Jeremiah's question is puzzling, says Reb Noson. In any number of places in the Torah we find the Jews being told that if they adhere to the Torah they will be blessed in their Land, whereas if they do not, they will be banished from it. All the Jewish leaders and prophets throughout the generations warned them of the dire consequences should they fail to follow the precepts of the Torah. What, then, was the difficulty of God's question?! And the answer, that the Jews did not recite the blessing for Torah study, implies that this lapse is far more severe than failure to study or observe. This is even more difficult to understand. How can not reciting the blessing on Torah study be worse than transgressing it?

Reb Noson answers that God's question was posed not as rebuke for a past misdeed. Rather, it was meant as a suggestion for the future. From the experience of exile, we should glean advice on how to return to God and the

Land. The wise men and prophets failed to discern this forward-looking angle. They thought, “Whatever happened, happened. What difference does it make now why the Land was lost?”

So God Himself answered the question. True, the Jews served idolatry, committed adultery, etc. But God wants us to draw strength from our misfortunes. Perhaps in the past you ignored some mitzvot. Why should this stop you from trying to serve God even a little? Why not grab a simple, easy-to-do mitzvah, or study a few lines of Torah? Who says that because you've strayed, you have to give up *everything*? Bind yourself to that little bit of spiritual yearning that remains!

Reb Noson says this is hinted at in the answer “They did not recite the blessing for Torah study.” Certainly the Jews did not wake up one morning and begin to serve idols. Their decline began with a small sin and slowly evolved until they were guilty of the three cardinal transgressions (sexual immorality, murder, idolatry). They kept falling and falling until they committed such crimes because they didn't strengthen themselves with the little bit of spiritual yearning they still had left.

As long we try to draw upon whatever little bit of inner strength we still have, there is hope.

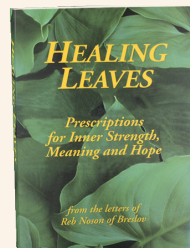
*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Hilkhos Prikah u'Te'inah 4:35  
A Gutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!*

*This is a reprint*

## HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell



We are obligated to give thanks for the past, for every bit of relief that God in His mercy gives us in our difficulties. (Letter #163)

# Rebbe Nachman's Torah

Compiled by Chaim Kramer

Every day—sometimes more than once a day—we say this verse in Parashat Eikev when we recite the Grace After Meals. Rebbe Nachman and Reb Noson illuminate its deeper meaning.

**“When you eat and are satiated, you should bless God your Lord on the good land that He gave you”** (Deuteronomy 8:10).

The main place for holy foods and holy eating is the Holy Land (*Likutey Halakhot* II, p. 13a).

Through the Grace After Meals, we draw upon ourselves the sanctity of the Holy Land (*ibid.*, I, p. 94-48a).

What is the connection between blessing God for food and the Land of Israel? All blessing has its source in holiness, and the essence of holiness is found in the Holy Land. Thus, while blessing God for our food, we draw holiness by mentioning the sanctity of the Land (*ibid.*, II, p. 108-55a).

\*

By eating in holiness, one can experience the *Noam HaElyon* (Divine Pleasantness), which is mainly found in the Holy Land. When we bless God for our food, we draw the sanctity of the Land into our eating (*ibid.*, II, p. 90a).

\*

When one blesses God for the bounty he has received, he reveals Divine Providence. The Holy Land itself implies Divine Providence. One who eats and blesses God is like one who eats manna, the “bread from Heaven” (Exodus 16:4)—it is as if he is receiving directly from Divine Providence (*ibid.*, I, p. 44).

\*

The angels challenged God for favoring the Jews, in apparent contradiction to His statement “I will not show favor” (Deuteronomy 10:17). God responded, “How can I not favor them? I said, ‘You will eat, be satiated and bless,’ yet they are stringent with themselves on an olive’s worth as well as on an egg’s worth [i.e., they recite the Grace After Meals even if they have only eaten a morsel]” (*Berakhot* 20b).

This indicates that a person finds favor in God’s eyes when he controls his desire for food (*Likutey Moharan* I, 47:1; *ibid.*, I, 67:2).

## SIDEPATH

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

51. Do not be concerned with wealth. With or without it, your life can be in vain. The world deceives us completely. It makes us think that we are constantly gaining, but in the end, we have nothing. People spend years earning money, but are left with empty hands. Even a person who attains wealth is taken away from it.



Man and wealth cannot endure together. Either wealth is taken from the man, or the man is taken from his wealth. The two do not remain together. Where are all the riches accumulated since the beginning of time? People have amassed wealth since the beginning – where is it all? It is absolutely nothing.

\*

It is not good to be “old,” whether an “old” chassid or an “old” tzaddik. You must remain young, renewing yourself each day and making a fresh start. Only one thing improves with age. The Talmud teaches that a pig becomes stronger as it grows older (*Shabbat* 77b).

\*

Do not be a fanatic. Serving God is not fanaticism. Those who pursue worldly goods are the true fanatics. The world will consider you a fanatic if you abandon all worldliness in your quest for Godliness. but you needn't go this far. For you can serve God with restraint.

\*

The world says that you need not seek greatness. But I say that you should only seek greatness. Seek out the greatest possible tzaddik. Choose only the greatest tzaddik and guide.



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

P.O. Box 5370 • Jerusalem, Israel • 972.2.582.4641  
P.O.B. 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).

© 2013 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.