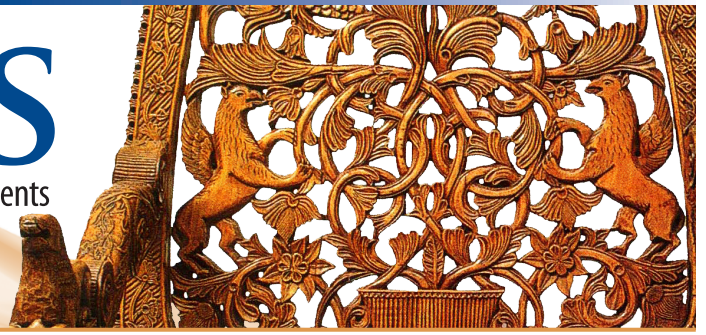


# PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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## Open Your Hand, Open Your Door

By Ozer Bergman

“Open your hand generously to him, and be sure to extend to him enough credit to take care of his needs” (Deuteronomy 15:8).

Considering the paramount position of *tzedakah* (charity) in Jewish life, the mention of this mitzvah in *Parashat Re'eh* carries an especially strong message for us. And the proximity of the reading of this *parashah* to the month of Elul, the month of repentance, carries a deeper meaning than the simple directive, “Give charity!”

Notice that the language in this verse and in verse 10 are doubled. Here it says *patoach tiptach* (literally, “open, you should open”), and in 15:10 it says *naton titein* (give, you should give). Why the repetition?

Rebbe Nachman quotes our Sages, who teach that “all beginnings are difficult” (*Mekhilta, BaChodesh 2*). Whether the undertaking is spiritual or material, a person faces adversity in any beginning – a new job, a new level of Jewish commitment, a new relationship, a new school year. It's like facing a closed door. One must work hard just to get “a foot in the door.” However, once the door opens a crack, one faces less and less adversity, until gradually the undertaking can be dealt with easily.

How do you “open the door?” With charity, says the Rebbe. Another reason for the double language is as encouragement. Giving charity entails overcoming a number of mental blocks: I worked hard for this money; I have a lot of overhead; I have to make sure I don't become a charity case myself; I've got my own problems. Furthermore, giving charity requires judgment. Is the potential recipient legitimate? From the hundreds of requests you receive, how can you possibly check the veracity and/or legitimacy of each one? And how much should you give? (For a synopsis of the laws and practices of giving charity, see *More Blessed to Give: Rebbe Nachman on Charity*, published by the Breslov Research Institute.)

Remember: “Open, you should open.” Open your hand, open your door. Use this door to break your miserliness

and give with an open hand. Use it to bolster your faith that “God provides.” Remember that if you open the door for the poor man and receive him graciously, “doors” will be opened for you and you, too, will be received graciously. This is part of the awesome power of charity.

Charity is particularly important in the month of Elul. A year is ending, a Day of Judgment soon coming. Repentance is called for. How do I open its door? How do I *find* the door?! What can I do to ensure that I will be welcomed and allowed to stay? How do I open the door to the New Year and get off to a good start?

Show compassion when you open your door and “pass judgment” on the poor. Then, when you knock on Heaven's door, it will be graciously opened for you.

May Hashem help us to give charity as best as we can, in order to open the Gates of Repentance, Compassion and Kindness for the Jewish people, this year and every year. And in the merit of this mitzvah, may we be bestowed with the joy of Sukkot, now and forever, with the coming of Mashiach, the Final Redemption and the building of the Holy Temple, speedily, in our times. Amen!

*Based on Likutey Moharan II, 4  
A Gutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!*

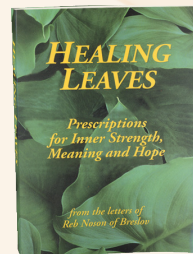
## HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell

A person's main test and the essence of his free will stems from the fact that he does not really comprehend his own situation. For if he were to realize exactly what was happening at all times, if he were aware of his true position at every moment – if he were to appreciate how very precious to God is his every single good movement and thought – then he would certainly be chasing

after God with all his might, and he would be a tzaddik! (*Letter #224*)



# Rebbe Nachman's Torah

Compiled by Chaim Kramer

*For seven years, your Hebrew slave has helped you make a nice living. What will you do when it's time to set him free? God's assurance of blessing applies just as much to our own livelihood today.*

**"God your Lord will bless you in everything you do"** (Deut. 15:18).

"Everything you do"—even a little bit.

You need not undertake a tremendous workload in order to receive God's blessing. God will bless you even if you invest only a little bit of effort in your work—as long as you accept upon yourself the yoke of Torah (*Likutey Halakhot III*, p. 188a).

\* \*

When a person engages in work or a trade, he creates a vessel with which to invoke and receive God's blessing. He need not extend himself completely, working many long and hard hours to receive that blessing. All blessing and bounty descend from on high. The closer a person draws himself to God, the closer he will be to the Source of blessing.

In contrast, the more he engages in material pursuits, the more he distances himself from the Source of blessing, and the harder he will have to work (*ibid.*, IV, p. 190a).

\* \*

Man must toil for his livelihood (cf. Genesis 3:19). Yet no matter how hard he toils, he will profit only as much as God blesses him. Why, then, must we toil if the end result is always determined by God? And why can't we rely on our trust in God that He will provide, and not work at all?

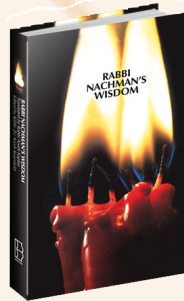
As a result of Adam's sin, sparks of holiness were scattered throughout the world. The real reason we work is to rectify the sparks of holiness that are found in every single object in the world.

As far as who will rectify which sparks, God decides. Therefore we see that certain people get an inspiration to invest in a certain business or trade, while other people have different thoughts to pursue other ways of making money. All these inspirations stem from God and are His way of providing. It is completely false to believe "My strength and the power of my hand made for me all this wealth" (Deut. 8:17) (*Likutey Halakhot VIII*, p. 120a-b).

## SIDEPATH

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

52. God's glory cries out from all things. Even the stories of all nations ring with God's glory. God's glory always cries out, calling you to come close to Him. For God, with all His love and mercy, wants you to be close.



Sometimes in the middle of your prayers, you become enflamed and the words flow from your lips with burning devotion. At this time, God's own light is inside you, beckoning you to draw near.

[And sometimes] when God withdraws and is far off, you must still pray to Him. It is written, "Throw your burden upon God" (Psalms 55:23). You must literally throw your prayers toward God from afar. The *Tikkuney Zohar* (#21, 61b) states, "Happy is the man who knows how to throw arrows." These are the prayers that must be thrown towards God.

53. If you have faith, you are truly alive.

When you have faith, every day is filled with good. When things go well, it is certainly good. But when you have troubles, it is also good. For you trust that God will eventually have mercy, and the end will be good. Everything must be good, for it all comes from God.

The life of a person who does not have faith is not really a life. When evil befalls him and he loses all hope, there is nothing to rouse or comfort him, for he has no faith. He goes without God and His Providence and has no good. But if you have faith, your life will be good and pleasant.



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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.*