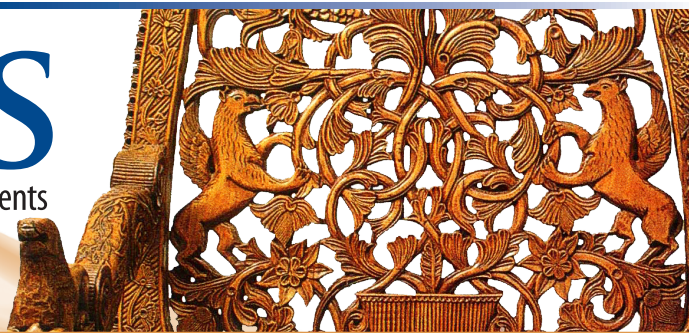


# PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

PARASHAT NITZAVIM-VAYEILEKH • 5773 • VOL. 3 NO. 48

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## If You Want It, Ask For It

By Ozer Bergman

“[The Torah] is not in heaven...nor is it on the other side of the ocean [that you should] say, ‘Who will...get it for us?’... It is in your mouth and heart, so that you can keep it” (Deuteronomy 30:12-14).

Rashi comments: For if the Torah was in heaven or across the sea, you would have to climb to the sky and cross the ocean to get it.

It is indeed one more thing to be thankful for, that we do not have to go to extraordinary lengths to study Torah. Even in Rebbe Nachman’s time, there were already many *seforim* (holy books) being printed and bought (*Rabbi Nachman’s Wisdom* #18). However, to actually learn the Torah and put it into practice – that’s a daunting challenge! How can we ever hope to accomplish it?

“It is in your mouth and heart, so that you can keep it.”

Reb Noson explains that the Torah itself is giving us the solution: Talk to God about your desire to learn His Torah, about how much you want to understand it better and remember it more clearly, especially when you need to apply it. God doesn’t hold us responsible for what we can’t do. He doesn’t test us beyond our abilities. He’s not out to “catch” us at wrongdoing. But He does expect us to turn to Him and ask for help.

Maybe you need to be more proficient in Hebrew – ask God for help. Perhaps your schedule is too crowded and you can’t find time to learn – ask Him to give you the strength to unsubscribe from mailing lists and stop wasting time playing Doom and Quake. Maybe you can’t get hold of the *seforim* you need. Express to Him how much you’re willing to sacrifice whatever you need to, to know Him, to know His Torah. For the moment you’re truly ready to sacrifice yourself for the Torah, it’s yours.

But there’s a catch to buying *seforim*. As the Rebbe commented, “People are unaware of this. All the books in the world won’t help if you don’t learn” (ibid.). Which would be a shame. For the Rebbe also told us that the power of Torah is so great that even the worst habitual sinners would break free from their evil if they would just maintain daily Torah study sessions, “be what may, come what may” (ibid. #19).

*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Hoda’ah 6:18*

\* \* \*

“While I am living in your midst, you rebel against God. Certainly [that will be the case] after my death... For I know that after I die, you will act wickedly” (Deuteronomy 31:27, 29).

Rashi points out that as long as Joshua was alive, the Jews did *not* act wickedly (Judges 2:7). He explains this verse as meaning that as long as the disciple is alive, the teacher is considered alive. Along these lines, Reb Noson cites the *Zohar* (II, 174a), which teaches that whenever the Torah says that a tzaddik died, it is only from our point of view.

Thus, even when we see that a tzaddik is dead and buried, if there are people who study his teachings and teach them to others, then even from our point of view the tzaddik is not dead.

*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Hilkhoh Sheluchin 5:11  
A Gutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!*

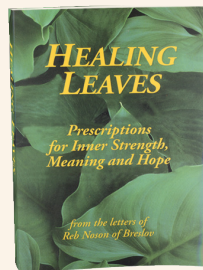
*Breslov Research Institute wishes  
you a good and sweet new year.*

## HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell

“Only trust!” (*Tzaddik* #501). This is what I heard from Rebbe Nachman’s holy mouth, words that left his mouth as arrows shot from the hand of a warrior! Therefore I say to you, too, and to all our friends – do not worry and do not be sad! God is with you always, and He will surely sustain you honorably. God will never abandon His people, and those who take shelter in Him will certainly never be faulted. (*Letter* #238)



The Rebbe told me explicitly, “God is right there with you; He’s right next to you. Do not be afraid.” (*Letter* #171)

# Rebbe Nachman's Torah

Compiled by Chaim Kramer

**“Today all of you are standing before God”** (Deuteronomy 29:9).

*Parashat Nitzavim* is always read on the Shabbat before Rosh HaShanah. Since it takes a unity of people joining together with love to mitigate the decrees of the Day of Judgment, Moses advises us to “stand together.”

On a symbolic level, “you” refers to the person, “standing” refers to the place, and “today” refers to time. By joining together, we connect the concepts of person, space and time and bring them before God (*Likutey Halakhot* VIII, p. 145b-146a).

\* \*

Wherever a person may be, he should try to recite his prayers in the pure air of the Land of Israel. How? The solution is alluded to in this verse:

“Standing”—this refers to prayer (*Berakhot* 6b).

“Before God your Lord”—this corresponds to the Land of Israel, as our Sages teach: “Whoever lives in the Land of Israel is [like] one who has a God” (*Ketuvot* 110b).

“Your leaders, your tribes...”—Scripture lists ten categories of people, corresponding to the ten fingers of the hands. When a person claps his hands during prayer, he can arouse the pure air of the Land of Israel and draw upon himself the sanctity of the Holy Land (*Likutey Moharan* I, 44:5).

\* \*

**“I am one hundred and twenty years old today,” he said to them. “I am no longer able to come and go”** (Deuteronomy 31:2).

The fountains of wisdom became closed to Moses (Rashi).

Moses grew in knowledge every single day, so he knew that on this day, when he could no longer attain any more knowledge of God, he must pass away (*Likutey Halakhot* I, p. 154).

Before he passed away, Rebbe Nachman said, “I have already reached such a level that I can no longer advance while still clothed in this earthly body. I yearn to put this body aside, for I cannot remain on one level” (*Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom* #179).

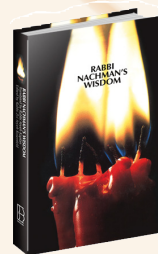
## SIDEPATH

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

61. We frequently find the expression “*Hadri Bi*” (“I reversed myself”) in the Talmud when a Sage reverses his opinion.

[However, the expression implies that he reversed himself rather than his opinion.]

“*Hadri Bi*” refers to repentance. The Sage had interpreted the Torah incorrectly and was now repenting for it. As soon as he was questioned about this, he became aware of his error. He knew that it caused a blemish in the Torah for which he must repent.



Sometimes a person may have the potential for repentance, but it is not brought out into actuality. He may then try to perceive something above his level, and this will lead him to make his repentance actual.

Thus, the Talmud says, “*Hadri Bi*” (literally, “I reversed in me”). For the repentance was in him, but only in potential. Only now can it be expressed.

62. Human thought has tremendous potential. Thought can bring about many things, even inflation.

When thought is intensely concentrated, it can exert great influence. Every faculty of the mind, both conscious and unconscious, down to the innermost point, must be focused without distraction. When many people do this, their thoughts can actually force something to take place.

You can also make use of this in your studies. For example, you can concentrate on completing the four sections of the *Shulchan Arukh*. Picture in your mind exactly how you will go about your course of study. If your desire is strong and your concentration intense enough, you will succeed.



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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.*