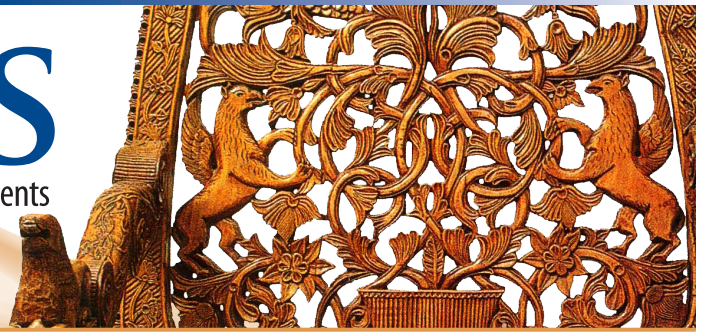


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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Dressing the Part

By Ozer Bergman

“No male article should be on a woman, and a man should not wear women’s clothing. Whoever does such things is loathsome to God your Lord” (Deuteronomy 22:5).

“There is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

Even though the verse from our *parashah* contains two distinct mitzvot, the former addressed to women and the latter to men, both mitzvot contain advice for each gender. Each of us is a microcosm, and thus we contain within ourselves both male and female characteristics. Among our “male” traits are those that move us to be aggressive

We all contain within ourselves both male and female characteristics.

and warlike, to claim for ourselves that which we’ve earned or “conquered.” “Female” traits include the ability to admit weakness and to be submissive. And we’re all aware that there are times and places where a person has to “borrow” traits from the other gender in order to properly respond to a situation at hand.

Reb Noson gives the following as an example: When a person stands in prayer before God, he must be careful to present himself as powerless, totally dependent on God’s good graces. One cannot claim that he deserves what he is asking for; that would be like wearing a “male article” at a time when he needs to acknowledge that he would be impotent were it not for God’s constant help.

Then there are situations in which a Jew has to take a stand to prevent or uproot evil – whether within himself, in his family, or in his community. (Of course, before you “shoot your gun,” make sure you know what you’re doing!). These are times when “a man should not wear women’s clothing.”

Interestingly enough, the outcome of either of these offenses “is loathsome to God.” Rashi comments on each mitzvah that its transgression leads to lewdness, which, our Sages tell us, is an anathema to Hashem (*Sanhedrin* 93a). In our context, that means that the conceit that doesn’t allow a person to submit himself to God’s will, will also push him to “conquer” others whom he shouldn’t (even if only in his mind).

So, too, if a person doesn’t stand up to the evil urges within himself when he really ought to, then his drives will continue to abuse his submissiveness and push him to thoughts, words and actions that God finds loathsome.

In this month of Elul, when we are preparing for Rosh HaShanah, let us follow the advice of our holy works and take extra care to preserve and improve our *kedushah* (holiness, sexual purity). Make sure you “dress right” for every occasion!

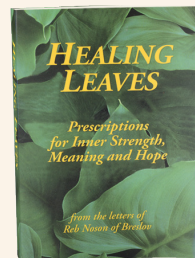
*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Lo Yilbash Gever 2
A Gutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!*

HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell

We all have free choice, and the primary way by which we can draw close to God is the one that the Rebbe, of blessed memory, introduced to the world: to yearn intensely with strong, positive desires for God every day, to strive to articulate them in detail and to express ourselves [in our own words and language] before God.



The Rebbe endorsed this practice innumerable times, recommending it for every person in the world, for it applies to everyone equally. Happy is the one who incorporates this practice into his life. All our vitality, particularly in our times, comes only through our prayers and supplications. Our only strength is in our mouths. (*Letter #273*)

Rebbe Nachman's Torah

Compiled by Chaim Kramer

Rebbe Nachman teaches that faith in the tzaddikim can help a person overcome many trials and tribulations.

“Then God will strike you and your descendants with extraordinary punishments. The punishments will be severe and unyielding, and the illnesses will be terrible and persistent” (Deuteronomy 28:59).

At the time that the Heavenly Court dispatches suffering upon a person, they make it take an oath that it will not set out to afflict the person except on such and such a day; and that it will not leave him except on such and such a day, at such and such a time, through the agency of such and such a person and such and such a medicine, and by the hand of such and such a person, on such and such a day (*Avodah Zarah* 55a).

Ve-ne'emanim (persistent) literally means “trustworthy.” Our Sages teach that these illnesses are trustworthy in the sense that when they are sent to punish a person, they take an oath to leave on a certain day. Even if the person has not yet repented of the sin that caused his suffering in the first place, the punishment stays true to its oath and will depart on that day.

However, if the sick person gives charity to a tzaddik before that day, he mitigates the decree. Then any medicine he takes will have the power to heal him (*Likutey Moharan* II, 3:1).

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“God will also bring upon you every illness and punishment that is not written in this book of the Torah” (Deuteronomy 28:61).

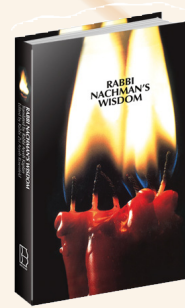
“Every punishment that is not written”—this refers to the death of tzaddikim (*Eikhah Rabbah* 1:37).

Healing is brought about through the Torah, which is transmitted by the tzaddikim. When a person lacks faith in the tzaddikim, he cannot receive healing. His afflictions then become unrelieved suffering. Thus, the phrase “death of tzaddikim” may be interpreted to mean “death that comes about because of a person's lack of faith in tzaddikim.” Neither herbs nor medicine can cure such a person (*Likutey Moharan* II, 5:1).

SIDEPATH

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

57. The Rebbe once told us that in his youth, he was greatly afraid of death. Even so, he would ask God to allow him to die for His sake.



The Rebbe did not remember how long this lasted – perhaps for a year. All during this time, he would not say a prayer without also asking God to allow him to give his life for His Name. He constantly included this petition, despite his great terror of death.

From this we learned that to serve God, you must overcome precisely the thing that overwhelms you most.

58. When you want to come up with new ideas in the Torah, you must concentrate on one particular subject. Take a verse or a topic and review it many times, hammering on the door until it is opened for you. Sometimes a thought flashes through your mind and then escapes. You must be a man of valor, pursuing it until it is recaptured.

59. The best thing for children is to keep a proper distance from them, not playing with them all the time. It is best not to be overly attentive.

60. People say that the world is gaining knowledge. But earlier generations made the primary discoveries, and this took the greatest wisdom. Later generations make discoveries only because earlier ones prepared the way. One generation makes the basic discoveries and later generations apply them. But the latter contribution is really the smaller.



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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.