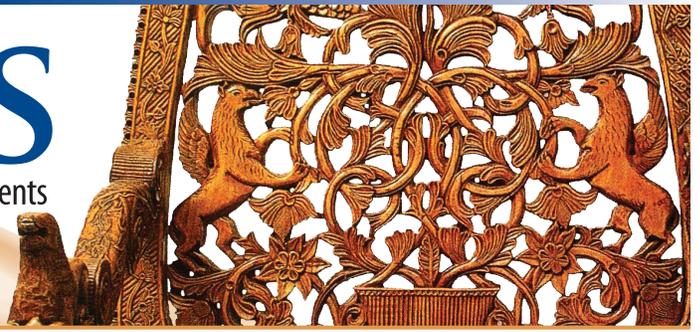


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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A Day of Love, Not Fear

By Yossi Katz

The idea of sin and atonement brings up the question of God's role in punishing us.

We often have the mistaken notion that God waits for us to slip and sin, and then coldly strikes us in an instant spur of retribution. For this reason, Yom Kippur can seem to be a dreadful day for many of us and amounts to little more than a mechanical self-defense process.

In *Likutey Moharan* II, 66, Rebbe Nachman explains our being punished as akin to someone attempting to tame a wild horse by pounding it with his fist; he's only hurting himself. When God punishes us, Rebbe Nachman teaches, the punishment does not end there; God is pained together with us.

The reason for this is because God has attached His great name to ours. The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni* #17) explains that the Holy One said, "If I leave the Jewish people as they are, they will assimilate. Instead, I will associate My Great Name with theirs and they will survive."

Each one of us is literally a portion of God from above and we are literally portions of the Shekhinah/God's Presence (see *Likutey Moharan* I #260).

After the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe ascended to Heaven and begged for forgiveness on behalf of the Jewish people. Moses said, "[If you aren't going to forgive them,] wipe me out." God answered him, "He who has sinned against Me, I will wipe him out." Moses requested that God forgive us for the sake of His Great Name, which is associated with our name (see Exodus 32).

Moshe was arguing that by punishing the Jews, God would be harming Himself. Therefore we say throughout the Yom Kippur service, "I (God) have forgiven according to your (Moses) word."

Throughout the *Likutey Moharan*, Rebbe Nachman constantly shows how things that we perceive as punishment are actually being done out of love, in order

to bring about our *teshuvah* (repentance) and *tikkun* (rectification). (For example, *Likutey Moharan* I, 6 explains how helpful embarrassment is.)

Reb Noson once said, "The Rebbe's whole essence is Rosh HaShanah. Mine is Yom Kippur!" (*Siach Sarfey Kodesh* 1-662). Even as he left the world, Reb Noson was mindful of his mission, repeating again and again, "*Chanun hamarbeh lislo'ach*—Gracious and abundant in forgiveness." There is hope for all: God will forgive!

Reb Noson taught us that God is a compassionate God. On Yom Kippur, He waits for us to pick up on the cues we are constantly being sent.

As Moses revealed to us, God does not want to harm Himself. This is a day for us to realize the great love that God has for us, and for us to express and regret all the things that have held us apart until today.

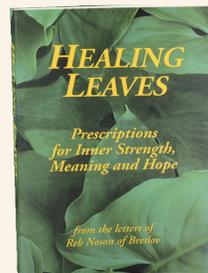
This year we will become aware of these roadblocks, and we will certainly be forgiven. Amen.

HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell

Pay no attention to any feelings of discouragement that may plague you. Do not listen to the criticism



of the forces of evil, for they reproach you only in order to dishearten you and to distance you from that little bit of good which you are trying to hold on to. Do not listen to them and do not let them sway you. Listen only to criticism and rebuke that draws you closer to God, not

that pushes you away, God forbid. (*Letter* #28)

Rebbe Nachman's Torah

Compiled by Chaim Kramer

In the Yom Kippur service performed by the Kohen Gadol, Reb Noson finds allusions to our own service of God.

The white garments

Although the gilded garments worn by the Kohen Gadol throughout the year effected many rectifications, on Yom Kippur he could enter the Holy of Holies only while wearing white garments.

It is possible to serve God with literally anything, but when one is trying to enter the highest levels, he should simplify his approach with the most basic articles of clothing and wealth. By shedding all ostentation, he will be able to effect the deepest rectifications on those levels (*Likutey Halakhot* V, p. 179a).

The two goats

The mitzvah is to take two goats that are similar in age, height and appearance (*Yoma* 62a).

One goat was selected to be sacrificed in the Inner Sanctuary of the Temple in order to effect forgiveness for sin. The other goat was thrown down to Azazel, also to effect forgiveness for sin. The human mind cannot comprehend how these identical sacrifices, offered to opposing forces, can generate the same results. We must have faith that our deeds bring about these rectifications. So too, we must believe that whenever we choose to do good over bad, we bring about great rectifications, filtering the good from the bad of the Tree of Knowledge and drawing down forgiveness for our sins (*Likutey Halakhot* VII, p. 182).

The confession

The confession of the Kohen Gadol demotes the “filthy places”—the sins of mankind—which were hitherto prominent and are now being cast away. This confession actually achieves a great rectification for all of creation. The entire creation was brought into existence through God's word, the Ten Utterances (*Avot* 5:1). Any sin blemishes those Utterances. Then the Other Side draws nourishment from those sins, leading to the spread of lies and the concealment of beneficial speech. When we take our sins and confess them before God, we rectify our blemish of the Ten Utterances and, by extension, all of creation (*Likutey Halakhot* I, p. 210a).

SIDEPATH

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

63. When something is respected, even a fraudster can be successful at it. He can be totally incompetent, as long as he has the desire and ambition.



It also depends on where you begin. Suppose you want to play the miracle worker. If you start where the general populace believes such things, you will be successful. Once you have a reputation among the gullible, even the skeptics will follow you. If you begin in a place of skeptics where you are ridiculed, you will not have a chance.

The very fact that miracles are accepted in a certain place can actually make them occur. But this is not always the case.

64. Fame and prestige prove nothing. Status is not related to merit. One worthy deed can result in a rank that, once attained, is never lost.

The kings of Israel exemplify this teaching. Because of one meritorious act, they were worthy of maintaining the royal line for four generations. [But] while their ancestor earned the throne because of a certain deed, the inheritors cannot use similar merit to retain it. They may do the exact same deeds as their ancestor, but these are no longer of any avail. No matter what they do, it has already been decreed that their generation will lose the throne. This is a great wonder. Understand it well. This teaches us that God's ways cannot be understood. It may be decreed that one person will not achieve distinction, no matter what merit he has. Yet another person may earn four generations of fame for a single worthy deed. Understand this.



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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.