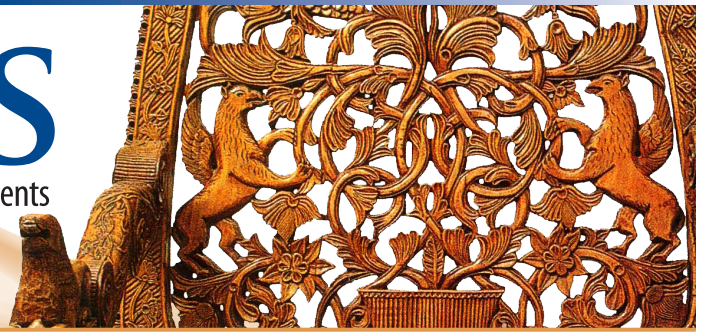


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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Follow the Tzaddik

By Yossi Katz

My little kids often ask me if Noah was Jewish. I find this to be an interesting question because we tend not to associate Noah with the founding of the Jewish nation as we do Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But wasn't Noah a great tzaddik in whose merit the world was saved from complete destruction?

“Noah was completely righteous in his generation” (Genesis 6:9). Rashi explains that some interpret this verse as great praise for Noah, who lived in a corrupt generation. But others say that the word *be-dorotav* (in his generation) implies that had Noah lived in a more righteous generation, such as the generation of Abraham, he would not have been considered anything special.

Yet how can we say this about someone whom the Torah calls a “complete tzaddik,” someone whom the Torah testifies spent 120 years of his life building what seemed to be an odd mega-ship exactly the way he was commanded, while the rest of the world looked on and laughed?

Reb Noson explains that Noah was no Moses. When God threatened to wipe out the Jews after the sin of building the Golden Calf, Moses pleaded on their behalf, “If so, then wipe me out as well.” Moses understood that God possesses much “hidden kindness” and that even if mankind is far from holiness, it was his job to reveal the extent of God's kindness and compassion, for “God created a world of kindness.” Had Noah had this depth of understanding, he could have also saved the world.

There is a rule that once God grants permission for destruction, everyone is in danger. Noah was no exception, and he himself had to flee and hide. The tzaddik represents kindness, but if he does not reveal this kindness, it remains hidden. Thus, Noah had to be secluded and locked up in the ark.

For 120 years Noah was building the ark, the purpose of which was to create curiosity and interest and raise awareness to the urgent need of repentance. Yet only Noah

and his family were able to be saved. He didn't succeed in bringing along even one extra person. He wasn't able to lower himself from his very lofty, righteous level to find merit in the wicked, pray for them, and wake them up by uncovering their good points. Moses, in contrast, had the ability to reach out to those who are most distant from God and work to bring them back.

Today we live in a world that is looking more and more like the generation of the flood. How can we save ourselves from both spiritual and physical destruction? By realizing that God will never leave us without a true tzaddik to guide us and do kindness for us. Now as always, we rely on Rebbe Nachman to reveal God's true essence and show each of us how to connect to Him in the most meaningful and personal way.

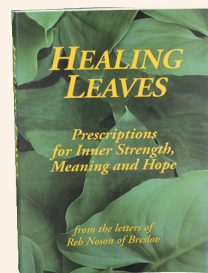
*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Milah 3; ibid., Shabbat 7
A Gutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!*

HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell

The truth is that you should rejoice every day in Rebbe Nachman's teachings. For it is no small matter – it is your eternal life!



God forbid that a single word should ever grow old for you! The words are always flowing, and every single one of them is a well of fresh, cool water to a weary soul. They are new every moment of every day. They give life to every soul that wants to live, reviving it with delicacies of every kind.

They reveal the greatness of the Creator and the light of His Godliness in a way that is simply inexpressible, for each person perceives them in a different way, according to his heart. (*Letter #185*)

Rebbe Nachman's Torah

Compiled by Chaim Kramer

“As for Me, I am about to bring the floodwaters upon the earth” (Genesis 6:17).

The main lesson of the Flood points to the overwhelming “flood” of disturbing thoughts that a person experiences throughout his life. The most powerful of these disturbances are thoughts of immorality, which brought on the Flood in Noah's time (see Rashi on Genesis 6:12).

Though the Flood engulfed the entire planet, it did not enter the Holy Land (*Zevachim* 116b). However, a few drops did make their way into the Land. Thus, the “flood” of disturbing thoughts threatens to engulf each and every person, even those who try to maintain some level of sanctity in their lives. One's only hope is to flee to the Holy Land – to sanctify one's “borders” as a protection against disturbing thoughts.

This can be accomplished by attaching oneself to the tzaddikim. For “Tzaddikim will inherit the Land” (Psalms 37:29) – the sanctity of the Holy Land is revealed to us by the tzaddikim, and their teachings and direction can help us find refuge from the floodwaters. Therefore it is written, “God remembered Noah [who is called a tzaddik]” (Genesis 8:1), and shortly afterwards, “God told Abraham, ‘Go to the Land’” (ibid. 12:1), since the revelation of the Holy Land begins with the tzaddikim (*Likutey Halakhot* I, p. 482-242a).

* * *

The “floodwaters” are akin to the “many waters” (Rashi on Song of Songs 8:7).

The “floodwaters” refers to the many nations that seek to overwhelm and destroy the Jewish people. They also refer to a person's love and fear of things in this world, dissociated from the love and fear of God. When a person feels humble before God, he experiences an intense sense of shame before Him, as if his blood (comparable to the waters of the Flood) is being shed. Then the Divine Presence protects him from the “floodwaters” that overwhelm him (*Likutey Moharan* II, 83).

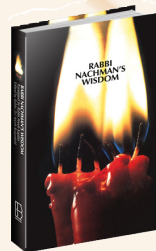
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The olive branch that the dove brought back to Noah (Genesis 8:11) alludes to the oil that would be lit in the Menorah in the Temple. This light would be able to illumine even the darkness of life – the floodwaters that threaten to engulf a person (*Likutey Halakhot* I, p. 262-132a).

SIDEPATH

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

65. Joy can protect your children from death. The evil force that destroys children is called Lilith. Joy is the antithesis of Lilith.



66. The Rebbe constantly spoke to us about praying with devotion, telling us to put all our energy into the words of our prayers. When a person prays with concentration, binding thought to word, bending his ear to hear what he says, then his strength automatically enters his words. All your energy anticipates the time when it will be drawn into words of holiness. When you focus your mind on the prayers, this strength rushes to enter the words. By concentrating on the words, this strength will enter your prayers without your forcing it.

67. Ignoring the words of the wise can cause insanity. One's mental state might indicate to him the need to do such things as tearing his clothes and rolling in the muck. But a wiser man than he tells him not to do these things. If he would only subjugate his will to the wise, his insanity would disappear. Therefore insanity results only from ignoring the wise. Understand this well.

68. The Rebbe often spoke to us about conversing with God. Speak to God so as to focus on your purpose in life. Have pity on yourself and beg God to help you find Him. Use whatever language you speak best and argue with God, petitioning Him in every way. If you set aside a time each day – at least an hour – to converse with God, you will surely be worthy of drawing close to Him.



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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.