

PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

PARASHAT KEDOSHIM • 5774 • VOL. 4 NO. 29

📧 breslov.org/pathways



Day By Day

By Yossi Katz

SO, DO YOU FEEL FREE? Although our stomachs may be feeling like a gigantic matzah ball right now, spiritually our minds have soared to great heights. On Seder night, not only were our ancestors released from captivity, but our own souls were also redeemed. But the freedom we received was of the miraculous sort, and as great as miracles are, they have limited results.

In Egypt we were on the lowest of spiritual levels – number 49 – and we needed something supernatural to wake us up. So God “dumped” an unearned keg of incredibly potent light on us. We then understood that we weren’t slaves; in fact, we’re capable of attaining awesome levels of closeness to God. But to truly foster this relationship with God, we must become like Him. This can be done only by utilizing our unique ability to choose to grow, thus building the vessels capable of holding on to this light for the long term.

We’re therefore given 49 days to ascend, level by level. On each day, as we count up to level 49, we also recite the prayer that recounts the attribute of God we should emulate. But most of us get lost in the Kabbalistic terms, and even if not, it seems awfully difficult to translate those attributes into the practical tools necessary to ascend. So where do we begin?

Just as we were given inordinate and supernatural spiritual bounty at the time of the Exodus, we receive the same bounty as we prepare to rise to the level of being worthy to receive the Torah. Although in Egypt we received this bounty in one fell swoop, we receive it slowly now and in a palpable way. The miracle of the Exodus is repeating itself on a micro level! Instead of our growth being in a logical and orderly manner, God guides us by manipulating exactly what each one of us needs to receive on each particular day. Our own experiences are the actualization of the Kabbalistic terms that we mention during the prayer. The “bumps in the road” are the miracle of the Exodus once again being performed – only this time, we’re taking initiative.

If we miss one day of counting the Omer, we don’t continue counting with a blessing. This is because the mitzvah of counting the Omer is to count every single day. The circumstances of each and every day are exactly what we need to grow. Just as each day begins with nighttime and darkness, so too, the unique spiritual potential of each day is preceded by challenge and difficulty. In order to build the vessels necessary to contain the light, we begin by believing in the potential and uniqueness of that day. Then, by holding strong and connecting to God via whichever mitzvot or acts of holiness we are able to do, we can overcome these barriers and reach the new level of Divine knowledge and closeness clothed in that day.

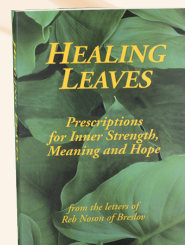
It’s not necessary to be a Kabbalist or a perfect saint to access the tremendous growth that these days offer. But we must know that God, out of His great love for us, manipulates each of our days in exactly the way necessary for us to truly get to know Him. Often this means that things will be difficult and not go “according to plan.” This could not be further from the truth. “God’s plan” was manufactured specifically in this manner to extract the qualities necessary to truly connect to Him. Perhaps we cannot yet live in the exalted manner that WE would like, but by doing what we can according to His schedule, we actually become a lot more like Him.

*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Pikadon 4
A Gutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!*

HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell



To a small degree, we can perceive – and vaguely comprehend – the way God’s wonders and amazing kindnesses operate in this world. Beyond this point, we need to have faith that God is thinking only about our ultimate goal. (Letter #99)

Stay Happy!

By Chaim Kramer

R' AHARON OF KIBLITCH was a devoted Breslover chassid who was known for his extraordinary diligence in Torah study and his cheerful demeanor, which was immediately apparent to all who saw him. Though beset with financial difficulties and other hardships, R' Aharon always managed to remain happy, singing and dancing at the slightest excuse. Needless to say, his joy was contagious. He once described how after an especially lively dance, the evil inclination had taunted him, "Aharon! You are the poorest man in town. You have all sorts of problems. Where did you find the joy to dance with such enthusiasm?"

"I borrowed it," he readily admitted. "I borrowed that dance from the better days ahead!"

Based on Oneg Shabbat, Hosafot, p. 525

* * *

The legendary Polish Breslover chassid and tzaddik, R' Ben-Zion Apter, lost his entire family during the Holocaust. Somehow he survived and immigrated to Israel, where he was a favored guest in the courts of many great Chassidic rebbes.

In his later years, he would go to weddings and other celebrations to collect money for the poor, even though he lived in dire poverty himself. A skilled *badchan* (wedding entertainer), R' Ben-Zion would sing and dance, invent rhymes in Yiddish and pretend to play the violin, holding an invisible bow across his outstretched beard.

Once he entertained a wedding party that included David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel. Ben-Gurion laughed at the old chassid's antics until tears came to his eyes.

"For me, a good laugh is a rare and precious thing," Ben-Gurion confessed. "How can I repay you for this?"

"*Ich hob tzuris mit di tzeyner* – I have troubles with my teeth," the *badchan* answered, gesturing comically at his poorly-fitting, false teeth to indicate the legitimacy of his request.

Ben-Gurion immediately gave R' Ben-Zion his dentist's business card and promised to make all the necessary arrangements right away. Some time later, after receiving the finest dentures available, R' Ben-Zion also incorporated this into his routine. "Look!" he would tell everyone, pointing to his mouth. "These are Ben-Gurion's teeth!"

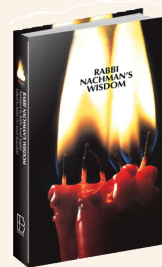
Heard from R' Akiva Greenberg, who, as a young yeshivah student, attended R' Ben-Zion Apter

SIDEPATH

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

120. The Rebbe once quoted the verse, "Be strong and brave, all who hope in God" (Psalms 31:25). The Rebbe stressed, "All who *hope* in God." You may not be worthy of holiness or devotion. But you can still hope. In this way, you can be "strong and brave."

You may feel far from God, but do not discourage others. Do just the opposite and strengthen them in every way you can. Speak to them with words that restore the soul (ibid., 19:8). Do this, and eventually you will also be affected and be worthy of true devotion to God.



121. The Rebbe once lectured us to pray with energy and devotion. He said, "You put as much energy into your prayers as I did when I was pulling up anchor."

"Once I was on a ship and an emergency arose where the anchor had to be lifted immediately. All the passengers were forced to pull the anchor rope with all their might. I went through the motions of pulling with all my strength, but I was really not using any energy at all. I was really only pretending. I was being coerced, so I acted as if I were pulling with all my might. The same is true of the energy and devotion you put into your prayers."

The Rebbe was telling us that we were far indeed from actually putting all our energy into our prayers.



breslov.org

P.O. Box 5370 • Jerusalem, Israel • 972.2.582.4641
P.O.B. 587 • Monsey, NY 10952 • 1.800.33.BRESLOV

Pathways is a weekly publication. To subscribe, please visit breslov.org/pathways. To make a dedication, please email pathways@breslov.org.

© 2014 Breslov Research Institute

The photo on the front is a close-up of Rebbe Nachman's chair, which is displayed in the main Breslov synagogue in Jerusalem.