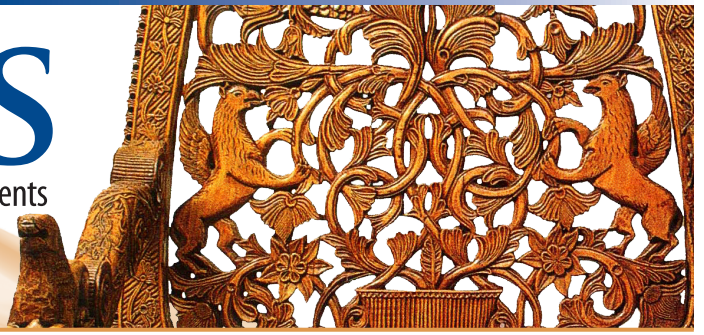


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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Take It Easy

By Yossi Katz

DO YOU EVER feel like you're "busy doing nothing"? Do you sometimes work endlessly and yet have the distinct sense that you haven't really accomplished much of anything? We all experience those days from time to time, and as difficult as they are, they allude to the incredible possibility that the exact opposite experience is also possible. Imagine doing "nothing at all" while all of your work is done for you! Does this sound too good to be true? Actually, it isn't at all. In fact, it's a concept we are all already familiar with – it's called Shabbat!

Our *parashah* states, "Work shall be done for six days, and on the seventh there shall be for you a holy Shabbat" (Exodus 35:2). Why does the verse say, "Work shall be done," instead of, "You shall work"?

When the Torah first mentions Shabbat, it states, "And God completed on the seventh day His work that He did" (Genesis 2:2). Rashi asks on this verse, "But what was left to complete on the seventh day? What was still missing? The world was missing the creation of rest. When Shabbat was created, rest was created. Now all of the work was complete."

But how could resting complete anything? Usually, if we have worked hard and are tired, we allow ourselves some rest so our bodies can recover before our next undertaking. But Rashi seems to be implying that rest was an integral part of the creation, not a prerequisite for starting something new. He seems to imply that without rest, God's creation would be lacking.

Vayekhal Elokim (God completed) also means "God desired." On Shabbat, we are most attuned to perceiving that everything in our lives and in the

universe exists and operates exactly according to God's will or desire. The completion that the world was missing was this last piece of information. Everything was set up and running with incredible precision, but without the knowledge that God's hand was behind everything, creation was still incomplete.

By resting on Shabbat, we acknowledge God's Presence. In fact, precisely the forms of work that we engage in during the week are the ones that we are forbidden to perform on Shabbat. By not engaging in them, we demonstrate our faith in God. And we understand that even during the week, when we engage in these forms of work, God is bringing about our every success and we are simply going through the motions.

There were once two wealthy brothers who lived across the street from each other. One was very generous, the other a miser. A traveler passing through town asked where he could get a warm, nourishing meal and was directed to the home of the generous brother. By mistake, he ended up by the miser. The miser promised him a good meal if he would first work for many hours performing grueling labor. When the traveler finally finished, the miser told him to go to the house across the street for his meal. After eating his meal, the traveler complained to his host, "I spent so many grueling hours working for the man across the street, and was given only a meal in return." His host responded, "I'm sorry, the meal was given to you for free by me, not because of your labor!"

By cultivating faith in God through our observance of Shabbat, we internalize God as the source of all bounty. According to the level of our belief, the Torah says, "Work shall be done" – our work can be automatically done by God. Wouldn't that be nice for a change?

Based on Likutey Halakhot, Hilkhos Shabbat 3

Starting Young

By Reb Noson

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE traveled to hear and speak to Rebbe Nachman during his lifetime. Reb Noson, the Rebbe's closest disciple, also made mention of the children who saw the Rebbe and came away enriched.

A nine-year-old boy who was ill with a slight fever was sent by his father to the Rebbe. The Rebbe spoke with the boy at length and gave him wonderful guidance. This boy was a very fearful child. The Rebbe said to him, "Why are you afraid *now*? Think how afraid you'll be when they take you out to the cemetery and leave you there alone. Today you are afraid to go out alone at night. What will you do then?"

He also told him, "Who in the world wants to burn himself with his own hands? When you sin, it is as if you burn yourself with your very own hands, because eventually you will receive the hard and bitter punishment for sinning. Surely you care enough about yourself not to burn yourself with your own hands."

The Rebbe then gave the boy a *segulah* for his fever: it was to take dust which had been trodden into the threshold and put it in a vessel on the fire until it became bleached and heated through and through. The dust was to be put on his side, and then he would be healed.

The boy grew up, and these and other words that the Rebbe had spoken to him remained inscribed on his heart. He remembers them to this day. From this we see the way the Rebbe would look at even a young child and seek to imbue him with the fear of Heaven so he should begin to learn how to serve God. Thus it is written, "Train a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

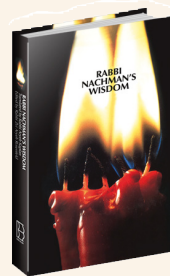
I have also heard from many other people who were children in the time of the Rebbe about amazing and beautiful things they heard from him in their childhood. They still remember them, and looking back, they now realize how the Rebbe was able to convey to them certain things which would benefit them later on.

From Tzaddik #490

SIDEPATH

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

308 (continued). Spend your days with Torah and devotion and you will be immune to the world's travail. You will shake off the toil and struggle of worldly concerns and no longer taste the bitterness and anxiety they have to offer. Devoted to God and His Torah, you will truly be alive, for this is the root of life, both in this world and the next.



You will then know that the words of the Mishnah are correct, even in their plain meaning. You will have chosen to live such a life, eating bread with salt, drinking water by measure, sleeping on the ground and living a life of privation. You must be willing to accept such a life, for there are times when even bread with salt and measured water will not be abundant. But accept

all this in order to immerse yourself in the Torah – "in the Torah you shall toil."

If you do this, you will certainly be "happy and it will be good for you ... happy in this world." You will have accepted all the suffering the world has to offer and be worthy of true life.

You will then be worthy of perceiving the truth, and you will know that the world was not created for ease and enjoyment. You will realize that the person who seeks the delights of this world will find only pain and vexation.



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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.