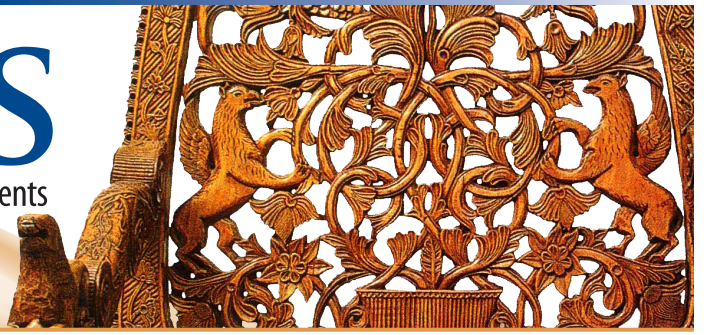


# PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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## One Day at a Time

By Yossi Katz

**“The Architect of the world never does the same thing twice. Every day is an entirely new creation”** – Reb Noson of Breslov

**PEOPLE LIKE TO** say, “Today is a new day.” There’s an incredible amount of wisdom in that expression. That’s because we have a tendency to view time as one complete unit, and therefore get caught up in the past. If yesterday was a “bad” day, it means today doesn’t have much of a chance. But in truth, each day is a new creation and a new opportunity. This is what is meant by what we say in our prayers, “He who renews every day the Act of Creation.”

The Torah prescribes a day-based waiting period depending on the severity of the impurity with which a person comes in contact. For example, one who has a minor encounter, like a seminal emission, only has to wait until the sun sets and the next day begins. Someone with a severe impurity, like being in contact with a corpse, requires a seven-day waiting period until he can be purified. This is because each day is different and unique; each day has its own power to cleanse and add additional holiness.

Even after the one who came in contact with a serious impurity has waited seven days and immersed himself in the holy waters of the *mikvah*, the Torah says, “And when the sun is down, he shall be clean; and afterward *he may eat of the holy things*” (Leviticus 22:7). Why should he have to wait? He’s already waited the required amount of days and immersed – shouldn’t that be enough? No, because by waiting just a bit more for the sun to set, he merits receiving the holiness of an additional day – an entirely new creation.

This teaching is very applicable to our own lives. If we feel “unholy” and are dismayed at the prospect of

engaging in sincere Torah study, prayer or other spiritual devotions, we should realize that every day is a new opportunity. What we didn’t take advantage of yesterday is no longer applicable, because God never creates the same day twice. We must say to ourselves, “Today I have the ability to receive something entirely new that will never come into existence again! I need to visualize today as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!”

But what if I take the initiative, yet don’t feel purified? I must not be discouraged. Depending on the extent of my impurities, I must now be patient and count each day, but in the end, I, too, will “eat of the holy things.”

During Pesach we strive to become a free people. The slavery we are freed from is most likely not the physical type. It’s not a matter of running away from a taskmaster with a whip, or a boss with a big mouth. The freedom we experience during this time is about recognizing that we have a Creator and that everything, even seemingly routine and natural occurrences, are under His direct control. When we accept that He is in charge, and that no matter what difficulties and craziness we experience, everything is proceeding according to plan, we become free people. This is especially important to remember while preparing for Pesach itself, when we may feel overwhelmed by the enormous amount of work needed to properly usher in this Yom Tov.

Right now is the perfect opportunity to begin living in the moment. Don’t get caught up worrying about yesterday or being stressed about tomorrow. We have the power to live each day as it comes if we acknowledge that God is in charge. It was He who freed us from slavery in Egypt to bring us to the Land of Israel, and it is He who is waiting to redeem us from our stresses and worries to bring us to personal freedom and joy, Amen!

*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Hilkhot Birkhot  
HaShachar 5:41*

# Impressions of Seder Night

**IN THE SPRING** of 1803, Rebbe Nachman married off his daughter Sarah in the city of Medvedevka. Reb Noson, who lived in Nemirov, made the journey to be with the Rebbe for Purim and Pesach.

On the Seder night, Reb Noson prayed the evening prayer with great fervor, finishing long after everyone else. Because Rebbe Nachman's followers prayed in his house, the Rebbe, who prayed in the adjoining room, was able to hear Reb Noson recite the blessing for Hallel. (The Chassidic custom is to recite the Hallel with its blessing after the evening prayer on the first night of Pesach.) Rebbe Nachman said, "Lucky are the parents of such a son."

Rebbe Nachman's custom was to spend the Seder night with his family, without any of his followers present. As he was leaving, Reb Noson managed to catch a glimpse of Rebbe Nachman sitting at the Seder. He was so impressed by what he saw that he never forgot it.

\* \* \*

At his own Seder, Reb Noson would recite the Haggadah – the story of the Exodus from Egypt – with great fervor and emotion. Often, the members of his family were afraid to look at him during the Seder, so great was the awe and fear that was visible on Reb Noson's face.

Reb Noson's grandson, Rabbi Avraham Sternhartz, related that the Seder night was actually a trying time for Reb Noson's family. They were never sure that he would make it through the Seder without fainting. Once, while reciting the words "The revelation of the Divine Presence!" Reb Noson became so filled with emotion and yearning for God that he actually did faint!

*From The Breslov Haggadah*

## SIDEPATH

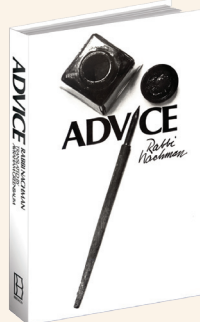
**Advice (Likutey Etzot) translated by Avraham Greenbaum**

**TRUTH AND FAITH.** 15. There are people who have an extensive knowledge of Torah yet lack personal worth. The teachings of people like these stem from "fallen Torah." Their influence can have devastating effects. It can cause people to reject even the most basic tenets of faith. Those who remain firm in their belief in God find themselves under attack and exposed to ridicule and contempt.

When such a situation develops, the remedy is to open your doors to genuine Torah scholars and offer them hospitality. This is one of the ways of coming to genuine faith, and the hold of those who oppose the faith and look down upon believers will be broken (*Likutey Moharan* I, 28:1-3).

16. Charity is perfect only when it is combined with faith. The same is true of all the blessings which flow into the world through acts of charity. They are perfect only when there is faith. Faith is the source of blessings. Keeping the holy Shabbat which is called the "source of blessings" – is the foundation of faith (*ibid.*, I, 31:2).

17. All things depend on faith for their perfection. Without faith, nothing is complete. Even the Torah itself, which is the source of true wisdom, has perfection only through faith. Faith is the foundation of the whole Torah. It is the basis of everything (*ibid.*).



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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.*

*Dedicated in the Memory of (L'Ilui Nishmat) Yehudis bat Shimon*