

# Enveloped in Prayer

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Rebbe Nachman once took one of his close students with him for an early-morning prayer session out in the field. When they reached the entry point to an old volcanic cavern half-hidden among the brush, he gestured that they should enter and do their *hitbodedut* within the deep chamber.

As soon as they squeezed into the space, Rebbe Nachman sat down on the ground and took out his small *Shaarey Tzion* prayer book, which was very dear to him. It was filled with numerous additional prayers for all kinds of events and situations, which he loved to return to again and again. Rebbe Nachman began to weep over the holy words, and his student could occasionally hear his master's sighs and moans.

The disciple was rooted to the spot; Rebbe Nachman's prayers were filled with deep emotion, and it was clear that he was so absorbed in his prayer that he had forgotten about the other man's presence entirely. Hour followed hour, and Rebbe Nachman continued his devotions as though the world outside had ceased to exist. The student sat quietly to the side, enraptured.

The day had flown by when Rebbe Nachman suddenly looked up and said, "Please go outside to check the time." He thought it must be time to pray the afternoon service. To the student's surprise, the sun hadn't merely passed high noon – it was about to set! The shadows of twilight were already gathering across the fields. An entire day had passed, and neither had felt the time at all. Such was the nature of Rebbe Nachman's prayer.

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Rebbe Nachman once made a gift of one of his old *talleitim* to a dear student of his. As he handed the folded fabric to his disciple, Rebbe Nachman said, "May sure to take good care of this *tallit* that I'm giving you—I hope that you'll value it in accordance with its true worth. Because I tell you truly that I shed more tears begging God that I'll be worthy of grasping the essence and meaning of a *tallit* than there are threads in it!"

This anecdote confirms another statement that Rebbe Nachman made about himself: that every spiritual accomplishment he achieved came to fruition only after he poured out endless tears and prayers to God for help.

*Based on Or HaArot I, pp. 103-104*