

FAITH – WHAT IS FAITH?

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What actually is faith? Why is it so necessary? When is it applicable and where should this faith be placed?

“We have to tremble with fear when considering God’s greatness. The whole world is filled with His Glory!” Rebbe Nachman repeated this to us many times. He wanted to instill in us a feeling for God’s greatness and a feeling for how much faith we ought to have in Him (*Tzaddik* #414).

Rebbe Nachman said: I believe that God is great. He is very great. He is Omnipotent. I believe He can turn a triangle into a square! (*Tzaddik* #407).

Rebbe Nachman teaches: Faith is like a beautiful palace with many beautiful rooms. One enters and wanders about from room

to room, from hallway to hallway... From there one walks on in Trust... then further and further. How fortunate is he who walks in faith! (*Tzaddik* #420).

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Rebbe Nachman said that “Others consider faith a minor thing. But I consider it an extremely great thing” ([*Rebbe Nachman's Wisdom*](#) #33). When the Rebbe told Reb Noson to record his own discourses, he said to him, “In your writings, every word should be measured. But when you come to the topic of faith, let your pen flow!” (*Rabbi Eliyahu Chaim Rosen*). The importance of faith is unparalleled. Without it, we cannot enter the realm of Torah or mitzvot. With it, we can attain the highest of levels.

But, what actually is faith? Why is it so necessary? When is it applicable and where should this faith be placed? How can we attain faith? Questions, questions, questions. We all have them. Aren't we entitled to at least some of the answers?

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Since Rebbe Nachman attributes great importance to faith, it stands to reason that there must be a wealth of information in Breslov writings on this topic. And there is. We will attempt to present a composite picture of what faith is: the value of attaining complete, yet simple faith; the power of faith; how we can acquire this faith within ourselves; the parameters of faith (in God, in Torah and mitzvot, in the Tzaddikim and even in ourselves).

WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is the foundation of the world; more specifically it is the fundamental principle of Judaism, Torah, and even of man himself. There is no one alive who doesn't have faith in

something or someone. Throughout life, we are forever being asked to corroborate that faith. "Do I have faith in my spouse, my neighbor, my child? Are they deserving of my trust? Do I have to have faith at all?" Well, what choice do we really have? Faith is an attribute without which we cannot survive in this world.

But what is faith? What is this trust that I place in others? First of all, we must "define" faith – see how it is used and expressed in Judaism. Faith applies to that which we don't know or cannot understand. We don't need faith to say that the four-legged piece of wood in front of us is a table, or the four walls surrounding us are a room. We see it. We know it. And we don't need faith to be convinced that if we stick our finger in the fire we're going to get burnt. We feel it. We know it. Faith becomes necessary only when we cannot directly experience the object with our senses or understand the reason for doing something. When told to do something a certain way by his mother, a child will say, "Why do I have to do it this way?" Inevitably his mother's answer is "Because!" This is the celebrated "Because" of faith. "Because I'm the mommy, that's why!" She expects her son to have faith in her; faith that as his mother she knows what is best for him. In essence, she would like him to put his trust in her that she understands what he, as a child, cannot.



Faith is like a beautiful palace...

However, as we grow older many of us don't know how to believe or what there is to believe in. We shrug off the faith of our childhood, considering it to be no more than the expression of immature thinking and a lack of sophistication. This leaves us wondering where to place our faith and for this we need guidance.

The Revelation at Mount Sinai took place. It is an historical fact. Moshe went up to Heaven and brought down the Torah. He, the True Tzaddik, saw what was available and acceptable, and gave it to us to guide us through our lives in this world. The same is true of all the Tzaddikim. They received the Torah from Moshe (*Avot* 1:1) and transmitted it as a heritage, from generation to generation, until this very day. Rebbe Nachman compares the Tzaddik to a mother: "The Torah is compared to milk and the Tzaddik nurses the Jews with the light of his Torah" (*Likutey Moharan* I, 4:8). Just as a mother knows what

is good for her child, the Tzaddikim know what is good for the Jews.

(taken from the book [Crossing the Narrow Bridge: A Practical Guide to Rebbe Nachman's Teachings](#); chapter 5 – Faith, pp. 62-64)