

How Does Rebbe Nachman Speak To Me?

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November 13, 2022



At first glance it doesn't seem possible. How can the words of a 19th-century Chassidic master from a small town in the Ukraine speak to people living in the 21st-century metropolises of the Western world? What does Rebbe Nachman know of the modern age—its scientific and technological breakthroughs; its advances in medicine, genetic engineering and telecommunications; its phenomena of global interdependence and cyber terrorism?

If you think that way, you don't know Rebbe Nachman.

Rebbe Nachman lived at a pivotal point in world history. Standing on the verge of the modern age, which would introduce both an industrial revolution that would totally transform the

way people lived, and an ideological revolution that would shake the entire frame work of beliefs and assumptions on which people had based their lives for centuries, Rebbe Nachman said, "I'll tell you a secret. A great wave of atheism is about to enter the world" (*Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom* #220). One of the Rebbe's main objectives was to throw out spiritual life rafts to those who would become engulfed in the impending ideological torrent.

So many people who read Rebbe Nachman's works have the uncanny feeling that he is talking directly to them. With startling clarity, he pinpoints the real trials of our modern age: the breakdown in personal and familial relationships; the rising incidence of depression, anxiety and other mental disorders; the overdependence on drugs, alcohol and other soul-numbing diversions; the existential loneliness that we feel even as we are surrounded by more wealth and possessions than any generation has ever known. The Rebbe saw clearly that further sophistication is not the answer. "The greatest wisdom of all," he declared, "is to be simple." "*Gevalt!*" he cried. "Don't give up!"

Rebbe Nachman shows us how to navigate the challenges of this world and make a success of our lives. To that end, he presents both the timeless tools of Torah, prayer, *mitzvot* and charity, and his own original teachings on joy, simplicity, faith, looking for the good points, and many others. His teachings about the Tzaddik hold out tantalizing opportunities for us to infuse our lives with more holiness and morality. Throughout his writings, Rebbe Nachman always encourages, never chastises. Even to the person who feels he is so sunk in his sins that he can never rise again, Rebbe Nachman assures, "There is always hope. Every day you have the power to start anew."

Rebbe Nachman speaks to everyone who is searching for answers!.

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