

# New Realities

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Eight years after Rebbe Nachman passed away, Reb Noson lost all his money. He had been raised with means and had married into a prominent, well-to-do family. The transition from a life of abundance to a life of poverty in the Ukraine was difficult to bear. Every time his family needed money, he sold another cherished object. Eventually he had to sell off his set of metal silverware – a valuable commodity in those years – and replace it with a simple wooden set.

Reb Noson recounted how hard it was for him to adjust to his new reality of eating off coarse wooden cutlery like the meanest of peasants. “At first I literally did not taste my food due to the new, strange texture of the utensils. It took me a few weeks until I adjusted and could savor food the way I

always had.”

Yet despite his challenges, Reb Noson was just as diligent in his Divine service as he had always been.

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R’ Mordechai Kanelsky of Kremenchug was a fairly unusual phenomenon among the circle of Breslover Chassidim – he was a very wealthy man. R’ Motyeh, as he was known, donated generously to the many poor Breslovers in Uman and its environs. He would provide certain serious spiritual seekers with wood and a sack of flour, enough for their minimal needs for the entire winter.

Once when R’ Motyeh was in Uman, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Bender noticed that the usually effusive man seemed upset. “What’s the matter?” he asked.

“Every time I visited Uman in the past, I gave wood and flour to as many worthy people as I could,” R’ Motyeh told him. “Unfortunately, I recently lost all my assets and now I can’t afford to give more than a minuscule amount of assistance.”

“Don’t be disturbed,” Rabbi Levi Yitzchok comforted him. “God gave you the famously difficult test of affluence and you did very well. Now He is testing you with poverty. He wants to see if you will strengthen yourself and be happy despite your changed circumstances, or if you will fall into depression and sadness. Here is your chance to shine in your new reality!”

R’ Motyeh later recalled how comforted these words made him feel.

*Based on Siach Sarfey Kodesh I:268, IV:597*