

# NITZACHON!

written by Chaim Kramer  
October 27, 2022



***Victory. Of course you want it! Who doesn't? But at what price?! And what Rebbe Nachman teaches us about it?***

Victory. Of course you want it! Who doesn't? But at what price?! Rebbe Nachman teaches: Our desire to be victorious – *nitzachon* – prevents us from accepting the truth. If, in a conversation or an argument we recognize the validity of the other person's opinion, we'll pursue our own reasoning, rather than accept – even worse, admit – that the other person may be right (*Likutey Moharan* I, 122).

The character trait of *nitzachon* is a frequently-discussed topic in *Likutey Halakhot*. Reb Noson writes: In the Torah, the word for eternal – *NeTZaCH* – also means victory – *NiTZaCHon*.

These two meanings are really one. Which victory can be called a true victory? Only that which is eternal. History has proven time and again that a conquered nation or an oppressed people will not remain silent forever. It may take years, a new generation may arise, but sooner or later the cycle of time turns round and the victor – because his victory was not eternal (permanent or final) – finds himself suffering at the hands of the victim. Likewise, this is true on the personal level. “Conquering” one’s competitor in business also creates feelings of hostility and a desire for retribution in the loser. Ultimately, such victories are empty and worthless. For the moment, one may have achieved one’s desired goal, but this contributes nothing to one’s Eternal Life.

Conversely, as Reb Noson tells us, everything you do for your Eternal Life remains with you forever. A mitzvah performed is a mitzvah credited. No one can ever take it away from you. If you perform a second mitzvah, that too is credited to your account. The real *nitzachon* is when you conquer your evil traits, your bad characteristics and desires. Then you are the true victor, with every good thought, yearning or deed credited to your eternal account. Seek the truth, the eternal truth, then you will always be victorious and always at peace (*Likutey Halakhot, Birkhot P’rativot* 5:2).

***Which victory can be called a true victory? Only that which is eternal!***

Learning to focus on the eternal worth of something is a very valuable asset. While trying to decide whether to do something or not, look at its eternal benefits, not at its temporary gains. This is especially true when you’re faced with a difficult decision on a controversial issue. Let’s say you feel you must take an unpopular stand on some issue. Fine. Take that stand. Be firm about it. You’re entitled. But, warns Reb Noson, before you debate the point with those who disagree with you, be certain that you’ve looked at it from the eternal

perspective. If your position yields eternal gains, then you know you've made the right decision. If, however, all you're going to accrue is some short-lived satisfaction and some temporary self-congratulations that you made your point then you're really the loser, and a big one at that.

Seeking honor at someone else's expense is also a form of *nitzachon* and is considered detestable and despicable. The Talmud teaches: The person who gains from another's embarrassment loses his share in the World to Come (*Yerushalmi, Chagigah* 2:1). This may be blatantly obvious when the "victor" gleefully gloats over the other guy's misfortune, or it may be much more subtle. Who can say that he's never promoted his own cause by saying something like, "Oh no, I would never do what so and so did. That's not for me at all!" Again, it's an example of the victor and the vanquished, where *nitzachon* has created strife and destroyed peace.

The way to overcome *nitzachon* is through prayer. One must repeatedly make this the focus of his *hitbodedut*. Plead with God to help you. Whenever you're faced with a possibility of *nitzachon*, ask Him to help you overcome your desire for a victory which is false, or temporary at best. Strive only for *nitzachon*, ask Him to help you overcome your desire for a victory which is false, or temporary at best. Strive only for *nitzachon* that is eternal. Remember, it is better to lose face (and even more) while saving the eternal soul, than to resort to conquering others and forcing your way upon them.

Even in a situation which demands an immediate decision, you can utter a short prayer: "God! Help me choose Your way. Help me make the right move and not allow *nitzachon* to play a part in my decision." If you always try to find God's will, then you'll certainly not seek to win a temporary, meaningless victory at the expense of the entire war. You'll ultimately find the right balance needed to live a life that will bring you eternal victory.

Another way to defeat the desire for victory is to make a point of engaging in dialogue with the one who disagrees with you. Dialogue can lead to compromise and truth. Regarding litigation, our Sages teach: “An equitable compromise is the best solution” (*Choshen Mishpat* 12:2). Compromise is an art that requires all one’s skills in dealing with people. There isn’t anyone walking the face of the earth who doesn’t need to practice compromise, just as there is no one who lives a peaceful life without compromise.

(Taken from the book [Crossing the Narrow Bridge: A Practical Guide to Rebbe Nachman’s Teachings](#) – chapter 10 – Peace)