

Overcoming Sorrow

written by Chaim Kramer
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Rebbe Nachman teaches: People say that there are two worlds. This world and the World to Come. We all believe that there is a World to Come. This world may also exist somewhere. However, with all the suffering that we see in the world and what people must endure, where we are now must be Gehennom! (Likutey Moharan II, 119).

Reb Noson told one of his followers, If you were constantly happy, you wouldn't see Gehennom (Kokhavey Or, p.78). The Gehennom that is this world, the suffering which many endure" we will be able to rise above it by forcing ourselves to be happy (see [Garden of the Souls](#) where this is more fully explained).

Once, on an Intermediate Day of Pesach, a young man came to Reb Avraham Sternhartz to speak to him about Rebbe Nachman's teachings. Because the young man had only recently become interested in Breslover Chassidut, Reb Avraham spoke with him at length. At the end of the conversation, Reb Avraham looked at the young chassid and saw how sad and troubled he appeared.

The young man sensed this and began to relate all the difficulties and opposition he was encountering since becoming a Breslover chassid. Reb Avraham said to him, Nu! Today is Pesach, the time of our redemption, and started speaking to him about the greatness of Pesach, the Exodus and the true meaning of freedom. He gave him much advice and encouragement to help him through these trying times. At the end of the conversation, Reb Avraham said to him, PeSaCH has the same numerical value as [Rebbe] NaCHMaN (148). How can we connect Rebbe Nachman and the concepts of Pesach? The Haggadah teaches us: This is what Hillel did! He took the Pesach, Matzah and Maror, and ate everything together. He advised this young man to accept Hillel's teaching. We can partake of the Pesach "the True Tzaddik" only by experiencing bitterness and difficulty! Then we can fully appreciate these teachings. Now, Reb Avraham said, go home and have a very joyous Pesach! (The Breslov Haggadah p.54).

If only we were joyous, we would not taste the bitterness of suffering and the full measure of life's problems could not weigh us down. This is neither fanciful nor unrealistic. It's simply that we know that sometimes, we can do nothing about our situation except pray. Rather than wallow in sorrow, we can rise above it and make the best of it. Things will eventually work out. Thus, Rebbe Nachman teaches: Joy opens the heart (The Aleph-Bet Book, Joy A:2).