

Q&A (0001)

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At the insistent pestering of a dear friend who goes by the moniker "The Great Nudnik," your friends at Breslov Research Institute will, with God's help, begin posting many of the questions that we have received and the responses we have given. All the original correspondents/questioners benefited from the answers. We pray you will too.

Question:

I heard that Rabbi Nachman spoke of "acts of madness" as a way to get closer to Hashem, and that mad and foolish characters appear in his tales. What is the meaning of madness for Rabbi Nachman?

Thank you!

Answer:

Shalom!

There are at least two ways of interpreting "madness." One would be in the sense of "madcap," silly and frivolous. This is certainly a way of getting closer to Hashem as joy is a holy state of being.

However, I think the "madness" you refer to is "wild, extreme." Sometimes a person has to put down his rational mind and push the envelope of his religious/spiritual behavior so as to grow. This is what the Burgher does in Rebbe Nachman's story The Burgher and the Pauper.

Hope this helped.

kol tuv.