

Rebuilding from the Ashes

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Once there was a devastating fire in the town of Breslov. Shortly after the conflagration, Reb Noson went with several other Breslovers to survey the damage. They saw a homeowner frantically digging through the ruins of his house. He was searching for anything that could be used in rebuilding his house. Any usable wood or metal was carefully set aside. Then the search continued.

“Do you see?” Reb Noson asked his companions. “Although this man’s house went up in flames, he has not given up on rebuilding. He is making every attempt to salvage whatever he can to start again. The same is true regarding spiritual matters. Even if a person feels as though he has completely failed and is ‘burned out,’ he should never give up hope. He needs to search out and collect every single good point buried within his negative actions and attitudes. In this manner, he

will rebuild himself spiritually and truly return to God.”

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Reb Yisrael Abba Rosenfeld was a very wealthy man. He appeared modern but was enthusiastic about spiritual matters since he was strongly committed to Rebbe Nachman’s path. Yet because of his many business concerns, he spent most of his time involved in money matters. When Rosh HaShanah rolled around, he felt devastated. “I made so much money this year, but what spiritual accomplishment was accrued? Compared to what I could have done, almost nothing. I was too involved in business!”

Then he spoke to Reb Avraham b’Reb Nachman. Whenever Reb Avraham spoke, his words penetrated deeply, like a powerful spiritual injection. The two of them spoke for a short while and Reb Yisrael Abba came away from the conversation a changed man. “He told me to be happy with the positive even if it’s meager, since a little is also good. He stressed Rebbe Nachman’s teaching that a little is also good and completely revitalized me.”

Reb Abba had a lovely family: children and grandchildren who moved to Israel and stayed faithful to the Torah. And it was all because he hung on and didn’t give up despite feeling discouraged.

(Based on Kokhvey Ohr, Anshei Moharan 29; Noam Siach II, pp. 115-116)