

# TIME — A MEDITATION ON REB NACHMAN'S TORAH 33

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Let it wash over you, like the surf on a lazy beach day-your hands clinging to the sand

Let it brush over your face like a gentle zephyr as you climb over the green hilltop

Let it lighten the room like the sun finally revealing itself with the passing cloud filling your dark book-lined study through the window, in a beam of dusty particles.

Stop managing it!

Stop fitting your schedule into it-

*all those chores and errands, the appointments and deadlines, the very day's work-if not, the guilt of time's passage will not have been lifted once again, and the Adamic curse leak into the night.*

The inner kritik must justify today's existence to the court above, or else there maybe no reason for tomorrow.

So you run and run from daybreak and the daf yomi 'til nightfall when you drop

letting the fatigue and increasing inability to do what you used to be able to "accomplish" in a day, relieve you of the kritik for a while.

Stop trying to manipulate time-to cut corners to save time to cheat and steal a few minutes (stealing maybe a felony upstairs!)

Finally finally surrender

to time

realize it as a gift and participate only as an observer.

Stand on the sidelines and let sacred Time begin to affect you slowly.

You well know the seasons and the months the equinox and the passage of holy days

the cycle of tempers you resisted for so long for fear of "pagan influence" into the pristine mono-theistic Biblical faith of the Father. La nom du Pere!

*Weren't you taught to ignore those astrological signs on the side of the Machzor on Succos?*

Finally open up to the crab and the fish and the goat and those symbols reflecting a rhythm a metre and key and tone that changes monthly.

Become open to the week of the sefirah (didn't Rabeinu tell us it would affect us daily!

Lord knows you suffered during "gevurah"!

Let the Shabbos finally invade your body in its preparation without the usual panic and bad tempers once thought by you as obligatory as the laws themselves!

let it already be savored in the friday afternoon mikveh, stay a while longer, feel Her Presence

the Song of Songs, chant slowly, feel the passion for Her Psalm 107 and feel the Baal Shem Tov's teaching, ships long out to sea finally coming home to port like your week.

Welcome the Bride with others and dance!

Let this holy time invade your senses with the light of the Sabbath candles, the spices each sacred meal and the red dry wine on the palate-

markers in time like buoys in the channel pointing and protecting small craft until they reach open waters again.

Agreed it is scary.

brought up to waste not a minute of time.

each fragment precious, a minute...even seconds wasted to be accounted for in some future court.

Did not the Vilna Gaon keep a little black book of all the wasted minutes he owed annually?

As if time was a commodity that had value like the billable hours my lawyer clocks up on me monthly!

each minute measured and "clocked"

More like a magazine of bullets as it passes through an old machine gun in a black and white movie.

Spitting out bullets from the front end while the magazine passes through the rear to emerge empty, having delivered its aliquot of death over time, yet broken down to a single unit of one bullet a time.

And at the end of time itself we are to be judged as to how we spent it like we spend money or bullets.

Did we "fill" it with appropriate activities, Torah and Mitzvot? pious activities and charity or did we "waste" it like water might be wasted or money.

In a market economy where spending is vital to the capitalist system I found it hard to see time in any other way.

Mother used to say in India during the hot lazy summers you might ask somebody what he was doing and he would reply "killing time and watching it die"

As if it were alive and might be subject to murder.

As if it were dependent upon us to maintain its life and protect it from those who would kill it!

In suspending time during those pilgrimages

whether to Uman Lizensk or Mezhibuz,

I purposefully remove myself from the dimension of time-as-I-feel-it

from its dominion and tyranny

and, in the presence of the Zaddik

I am relieved of its burden for a few hours

(at great cost to health and fatigue)

to continue to do the work of recovery and Return.

I now surrender by giving up any hope of managing it.

I surrender the hope of keeping it alive.

Let it die and continue despite me.

I cannot carry such a responsibility anymore.

Time is a modern notion  
history is an enlightenment concept (Hegel)  
modernity ended in the gas chambers  
let time be buried there too.

Let us open to the possibility of time as an independent force  
of its own  
a Divine force that splits into good days and bad days through  
no fault of our own  
born into a mystical cyclical story  
fixing what previous generations failed  
I now surrender and stand on the periphery of this Divine  
drama.

As such I become open to new possibilities and allow time to  
wash over me  
brush over my face  
its good and not so good parts  
remember that sunlight pouring into the study also reveals the  
dust-laden shelves!  
but in surrender I can breath and savor the scent of different  
days  
and welcome time into me like never before.

By Jay Unger