

Were You Here First?

written by Yehudis Golshevsky
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Rebbe Nachman of Breslov taught...

Reb Nosson wrote: "I spoke once with someone and asked him, 'Were you the first person born?' This is what Job's friends asked him in response to his bitter complaint. Rashi explains their question as, 'Were you born before Adam, the first man, so that you are in a position to know what has happened to every person in the world?' Each person can apply this thought to whatever he is going through... Were you born before Adam that you understand what is behind what every person goes through? The whole reason that a person is placed in this world is to go through all that he must! He must be as strong and as solid as a rock to bear everything in life. Whatever a person experiences, he must hope and yearn and wait for G-d and under no circumstances should he despair of G-d's mercy."

([Healing Leaves](#), p. 66)

What does this mean to me?

What can I possibly add to these words of Reb Nosson? They remind me to be clear about the limitations of my understanding and perspective, and to focus on where my work lies even when facing challenges. A person of faith isn't blind to the harshness in life, just a little more open to the prospect that G-d's judgments are greater than our capacity to grasp.

A prayer:

*G-d, help me see;
help me understand all that I see
in the light of Your truth,
in the light of Your ultimate justice.
When I see the success of the wicked,
help me realize
that it is nothing but an illusion—
nothing authentic, nothing real.
Real success,
true good, absolute happiness,
are found only with You,
dear G-d of truth,
and one day I will see it,
experience it
and know it.
(The Gentle Weapon, p. 70*)*

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*"The Gentle Weapon: Prayers for Everyday and Not-So-Everyday Moments – Timeless Wisdom from the Teachings of the Hasidic Master, Rebbe Nachman of Breslov" by Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, Adapted by Moshe Mykoff & S.C. Mizrahi with the Breslov Research Institute, 1999. Permission granted by Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, VT, www.jewishlights.com.

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