

# What a Tikkun!

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One of the great things about living within our particular Breslov community is a kind of shared spiritual language rooted in Rebbe Nachman's teachings. There's something inexpressibly relieving about running into a friend who, after asking me how I'm doing, understands exactly what I mean when I smile, raise my eyebrows, and nod in a world-weary way, "*Ovrim!*"

*Ovrim* in Hebrew means, "crossing over," but what it really means in local Breslov-speak is: "I am currently going through some rough stuff, but isn't that what it means to be an *Ivri*? Like Avraham, with Hashem's help I will also cross over to the other side and not lose faith. I will transcend this." [For more on the subject, see *Likutei Moharan* I:64. And make sure that you use BRI's version, because it is quite a complex lesson.]

Or imagine some minor (let's keep it light, although this applies to the majors as well) calamity. The mirror shatters; the pan of three chickens falls to the floor five minutes before Shabbos; the electricity cuts out for no apparent reason and will not resuscitate; Yanky has just knocked out his two front teeth for what seems like the fifth time (or is that only because he's the fifth boy?); or, worse yet, they all happened at the same time. What do we cry out? *Eizeh tikkun!* "What a *tikkun!*"

What a what?

What a *tikkun*.

The calamity was heaven sent to rectify my soul, and instead of moaning over my mini-tragedy, I can just affirm the truth: this is my personal *tikkun*. This is an integral part of the path that my soul needs to take in order for it to fulfill its ultimate purpose.

I'm speaking lightly, but of course this is true of the biggies as well...it's just not right to make light of someone else's tragedy, so I leave it for you to consider on your own. However, I retain full rights at all times to make light of my own catastrophes, minor or major (G-d forbid), and laugh until the last day, as Reb Nosson so memorably teaches about that woman of valor, each brave Jewish soul. He actually said that most personal angst is remedied when one considers how minor this will seem forty years after one's funeral, but not everyone is quite ready to use this as a stress-relieving mantra.

In any case, this is supposed to be a post-Uman post, even though we returned ten days ago so I'm tardy, but you'll see, I have a good reason.

I've heard many times that every trip to Rebbe Nachman's gravesite in Uman rectifies one incarnation. (Based on the number of times I've been and the fact that I will, with

Hashem's help, return there again, I must not have a good history.). Nevertheless, it's the sort of idea that I never saw brought in any reliable source, and so I've never taken it very seriously.

However...I do have to admit that every single journey is so clearly its own *tikkun*, so maybe there's something to the principle? One trip, we lost our bus; another, we were tested with a Shabbos break-in (sleeping gas included); on another, my clothing didn't arrive (in a Ukrainian heat wave, and I had all of the cooking to do); most recently, I lost my voice completely and could not teach or sing (tragical!).

By the way, with each of these *tikkunim* (and others quite serious that are not mentioned here), we also saw great revealed miracles. Nevertheless, it's always something different, always something that involves a very deep and necessary lesson for all of us (and somehow I feel for me in particular, but maybe this is self-absorption), and always makes me feel like I am involved in some cosmic reality show called, "*Tikkun* by Design."

So the tragedies are not tragedies, they are slowly (and sometimes quickly and radically) chipping away at the edifice of unrectified me, and hopefully I will not have to do another go-round but will finish it all out this lifetime.

On returning from this most recent journey, I came home at about 4:30AM to find: my oldest and youngest sons awake and having a party; that same youngest son dressed in a pink turtleneck of my mother's and a pair of pastel blue wooly tights; a house in a state of bewildering chaos (more than the usual bewildering chaos); and when I asked if Tatty is available somewhere beneath all the laundry to help me carry up the luggage, my oldest son says with melting tenderness, "Maybe you should sit down, Mama."

At which point I received the news that another son had been

in the hospital since the prior Friday night (it was now Monday), and hence no Tatty.

What a *tikkun*!

Thank G-d, everything is well, and clearly the *tikkunim* are ongoing, for my own individual and the collective ultimate good. My thought to go on for today, though, is how good it is to remember that this is indeed a world on the path of *tikkun* (that's what the Kabbalists say, too). And, also, that none of this is likely to matter to me forty years after my funeral.

"When a person knows that everything that happens to him is for his good, this is a foretaste of the ultimate future..." (*Likutei Moharan* I:4) Not only is it good, but as Rebbe Nachman said, "*G-d is constantly running the world better and better.*" Apparently, the *tikkunim* are adding up.

*Ovrin!*