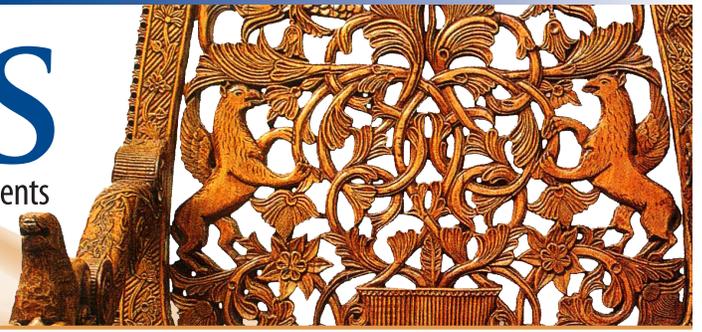


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

PARASHAT VAYISHLACH • 5774 • VOL. 4 NO. 7

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Room to Breathe

By Yossi Katz

When it rains, it pours. It often happens this way: first you have one problem, then another comes up, then a third... Before you know it, you feel completely overburdened, as if you can't even breathe. You imagine all of the world's issues being lumped together and heaped on your shoulders. But it gets even worse.

Our typical reaction to feeling overwhelmed is to hibernate in a state of utter disconnect. We cut ourselves off from friends, from our true selves, and especially from God. We feel hopeless and despondent, unable to cry out to our Father in Heaven, the only One who can bring about our salvation. This vicious cycle is summed up by the golden rule, "If you pursue anguish and problems, your anguish and problems will pursue you."

While our troubles are not at all easy to deal with and we are truly in pain, nevertheless, we have overlooked something fundamental. Rebbe Nachman teaches that every problem and trouble we face is packaged together with a silver lining. As difficult and as bitter as life can be, God's kindness and love for us is present in every situation. The benefit may not always be obvious; in fact, it may only be our realization that our situation could be much worse. Our job is to find those seemingly hidden threads of relief and, rather than disconnect, use these opportunities to express our gratitude and thanks to God for the little bit of good we have discovered.

In order to pacify the anger of his brother Esau, who was upset with him for stealing his father's blessing, Jacob sent a handsome tribute. Everything that Jacob did was with great wisdom. He told Esau, "I have acquired an ox and a donkey" (Genesis 32:6). Then he separated the different species included in his tribute, as he told his servants, "Leave a space between one group and the next" (ibid. 32:17).

On a simple level, we can understand Jacob's separation of the animals in his tribute as a way to avoid the prohibition of kelayim, or mixing species. However, a deeper explanation is that the "ox" refers to Esau (see Isaiah 34:7-8) and the

"donkey" to Ishmael (Ishmael is called a "wild donkey of a man"; Genesis 16:12). These two adversaries and their attendant nations were to be the rulers and oppressors of the Jewish people in exile. They represent the exile and all of its bitter problems.

Our Patriarch Jacob understood that if all of our troubles were lumped together at once, we would become overwhelmingly despondent, truly exiled from God. So Jacob taught us the secret of separating our problems into "groups" and looking for the "spaces" of relief.

When life gets bumpy and we find ourselves becoming emotionally overcome by our constant problems, we can give ourselves breathing room by finding the little specks of good and salvation that exist within our troubles. And when we search out those spaces of relief, our oppressors become powerless. We then merit the ultimate redemption: an indestructible bond with God. Amen.

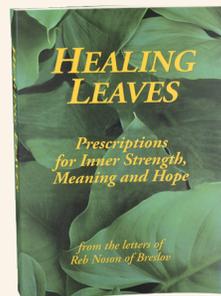
*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Hilkhos Kilay Beheimah 4:8
A Gutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!*

HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell

We must elevate all our worries and anxieties, so that we fear nothing but God. We should know and believe that all the anxiety and fears that come upon us, especially those we are experiencing right now, are meant to remind us to fear God. For when we remember to fear God, even though we know in our heart that we are far from innocent, still, we can immediately rejoice and be truly alive – for "fear of God gives life" (Psalms 19:23).



Rebbe Nachman's Torah

Compiled by Chaim Kramer

After escaping from Laban's house, battling the angel of Esau, and enduring the shame of Dinah's abduction, Jacob is reinforced with a special prophecy from God. Rebbe Nachman offers several explanations for the unique Name by which God reveals Himself.

God said to him, "I am El Shadai" (Genesis 35:11).

The Holy Name *ShaDaI* can be understood as meaning *She-yeish DaI* (there is enough). This may be understood in several ways:

There is enough Godliness for everyone; each individual can experience God on his own level. Furthermore, each person's knowledge of God is within his own parameters of understanding, which he must not exceed (*Likutey Moharan II*, 5:7).



He Who said to His world, "*Dai* (Enough)!" should say, "*Dai!*" to my suffering (*Bereishit Rabbah* 92:1). This also refers to the constriction of one's ability to understand God's ways when he is suffering (*ibid.*, II, 5:3).



There is enough Godly blessing in the world for each person to have his own livelihood. Consequently, one should be satisfied with what he has and believe that God is giving him what is best for him (cf. *Avot* 4:1). Blessing and joy abound when one is satisfied with his lot (*Likutey Moharan I*, 23:4).



"There is enough" refers to Shabbat. A person need not slave away his entire life. God "worked six days" and then said, "Enough!" Our work, too, should be limited so that we may focus on Shabbat, which is the ultimate reason for Creation (cf. *ibid.*, I, 11:4).



A person should guard himself from arrogance and consider what he has to be "enough." Our Sages teach that arrogance leads to adultery and immorality (*Sotah* 4b), because one who is never satisfied will seek sensual pleasures outside of his marriage. When a person guards himself from arrogance, he guards his covenant; similarly, by guarding the covenant, he foregoes arrogance and attains humility. He attains the blessings of "*El Shadai*" because he has "enough" and appreciates his blessings (*Likutey Moharan I*, 11:3).

SIDEPATH

Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom translated by R. Aryeh Kaplan, zt"l

77. The world is full of strife. There are wars between the great world powers. There are conflicts within different localities. There are feuds among families. There is discord between neighbors. There is friction within a household, between man and wife, between parents and children.

All strife is identical. The friction within a family is a counterpart of the wars between nations. Each person in a household is the counterpart of a world power, and their quarrels are the wars between those powers.



You may wish to live in peace. You have no desire for strife. Still, you are forced into dispute and conflict. Nations are the same. A nation may desire peace and make many concessions to achieve it. But no matter how much it tries to remain neutral, it can still be caught up in war.

Man is a miniature world. His essence contains the world and everything in it. A man and his family contain the nations of the world, including all their battles.

A man living in isolation can become insane. Within him are all the warring nations. His personality at a particular time is that of the victorious nation. Each time a different nation is victorious, he must change, since he plays the roles of all the nations. This can drive him insane, for he is alone and cannot express the war within him. But when one lives with others, these battles are expressed through his family and friends.



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P.O. Box 5370 • Jerusalem, Israel • 972.2.582.4641
P.O.B. 587 • Monsey, NY 10952 • 1.800.33.BRESLOV

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The photo on the front is a close-up of Rebbe Nachman's chair, which is displayed in the main Breslov synagogue in Jerusalem.