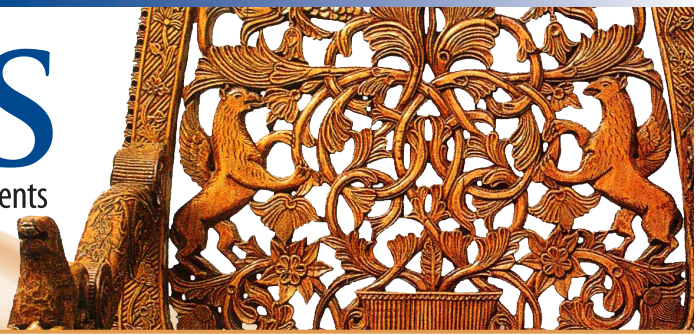


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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Wake Up!

By Yossi Katz

UNABLE TO CONTROL himself, the viceroy plucked an apple from the tree and took a bite. As soon as he swallowed it, he fell to the ground in a deep sleep and slept a long, long time. The viceroy's servant tried to wake him up, but he couldn't.

Rebbe Nachman's first tale, "The Lost Princess," is a fascinating recounting of the story of our lives. Being such, it incites us to ask a critical question: "Do I truly possess absolute self-control?"

Whether we are aware of it or not, we have all "eaten from the apple"—we have all erred in our own ways and fallen into a deep, spiritual sleep. Why sleep? Because when we are asleep, we don't even realize that we are far removed from reality. Things can be happening all around us, critical events in our lives that we might one day look back at and wonder, "How could I have missed that?" yet we are utterly numb to real life. So how do we wake up? How do we become alive?

We each have our golden calf or other form of idol worship. While these may not be actual idols per se, they distract us enough to sever our connection with God. Many hobbies or acts we engage in pull us away from our true purpose in life, causing us to daydream. The Midrash connects the sin of the golden calf with the red cow, whose ashes have the power to purify. In the words of the Midrash: "This can be compared to the son of a maidservant who soiled the king's palace. They said, 'Let his mother come and clean up the mess'" (*Tanchuma, Chukat* 8). So too, the remedy for our idol worship is the burning of the red cow.

Our *parashah* states, "Take for yourself a perfectly red cow, which does not have a blemish, upon which no yoke was laid" (Numbers 19:2). The *Zohar* comments that "red" refers to harsh judgments, whereas "perfect" refers to softened judgments (*Zohar, Chukat*, p. 180). The harsh judgments result from our various misdeeds; since we have become distracted and dozed off, there is a judgment against us separating us from our Heavenly

Father. We become convinced that we are distant and that we are not compatible with true spirituality. Or maybe even worse, perhaps we are in a truly deep sleep and are not even aware that we are sleeping. We think we're serving God and living a meaningful life, but that's because our self-evaluation is only at a surface level! But we can soften the judgment by finding our one "perfect" thing, our good point "which does not have a blemish, upon which no yoke was laid."

No matter what we have done (or not done), the essence of a Jew is completely good and pure. For this reason, Rebbe Nachman teaches that there is no Jew who does not possess good points. Every one of us must look deeply into our souls and find the good that is expressed through our thoughts and actions. In order to wake up, we must first understand who we truly are and how special it is to be a Jew. We are sleeping only because we have forgotten our true reality!

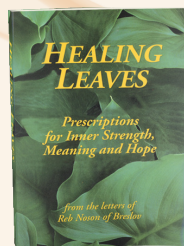
In the times of the Holy Temple, at the darkest time of the month, when one Jew would see the smallest glimmer of moonlight, the Jewish high court would declare, "Sanctified, sanctified!" and the new month would be announced. As we enter Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, may we all merit to see the small glimmer of light in our souls. Then we will be declared "sanctified"—Amen!

Based on Likutey Halakhot, Hashkamat HaBoker 1

HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell



Whatever may be happening to a person at any time in his life, from his childhood right through his old age, he must use precisely *this* to come closer to God. (*Letter #339*)

A River of Tears

By Yehudis Golshevsky

IN 1914, WORLD WAR I had just begun and 20 million Russian soldiers were on the battlefield, falling like straw before the wind. Like most religious Jews, young Breslovers did their utmost to avoid the army, not only because of the dangers but also because of rampant anti-Semitism in the ranks.

In Uman, many attempted to hide in the *kloyz* (Breslov synagogue), but it was hardly necessary since the authorities turned a blind eye on them. There was one sharp-eyed policeman in particular who could easily have made life difficult for them, but knowing that the authorities considered them “poor material,” he ignored them. They would venture out to make purchases and bake bread, walking Uman’s streets without fear.

Reb Shmuel Aizik Rosenfeld had a tall, strong, good-looking son named Moshe Ber. When this policeman saw him, he was very upset. He told the Breslovers, “There is a young man hiding with you that the army really does want. We want him, and we will have him.”

The police broke into the *kloyz* at night, rushing to where Moshe Ber slept, but at the last instant the lad jumped up and fled. He was very fast and quickly outran the soldiers, but he lived in constant fear. A deserter was a true fugitive, and could be shot by anyone who recognized him, no questions asked.

When he approached Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender for advice, the sage said, “Although I can’t help you, go to God. He is your only hope.”

The teen would hide in various places and beg Hashem for help, crying a river of tears every day. Eventually it became impossible for him to remain in Uman and he fled to Demitrivka near Tcherin. He hid in an underground crevice, trembling with fear and uncertainty.

He once shared his pain with Reb Levi Yitzchok. “Will I ever be a person? Will I have a family? Will this persecution ever end?” But he made it through the war and lived to see children and grandchildren.

Reb Levi Yitzchok would say after telling his story, “We see the power of tears. Never give up! Shed tears and hold on. God helps!”

Based on Noam Siach II, pp. 109-121

SIDEPATH

Rabbi Nachman’s Wisdom translated by R. Aryeh Kaplan, zt”l

134. *Likutey Moharan* I, 275 begins with the statement, “Every good deed that one does is made into a lamp.” One of my companions told me that the Rebbe once explained this idea in greater detail:

Some people have a light that burns only for a short time. While it burns, they can explore the King’s treasures. But then it burns out and they can no longer seek. Another may have a lamp that burns longer. He has more time to probe the celestial treasures. Still another may have a lamp that blazes for an entire day, or even longer.



But there is one who has the most wonderful lamps of all. These are never extinguished, but burn and shine forever. The owner of these lamps can delve into the King’s treasures continuously and forever.

From this we understand that even an ordinary religious person can explore the King’s treasures, but only for a given time as determined by his good deeds. You can find wonderful treasures even in this short time and then enjoy them forever in the World to Come. If you are worthy of more time in which the lamps created by your good deeds shine, you will certainly find more good in the King’s treasures. It all depends on how long your lamp can burn.

The light of a great tzaddik is never extinguished. His exploration of the King’s treasures can go on forever.



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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.