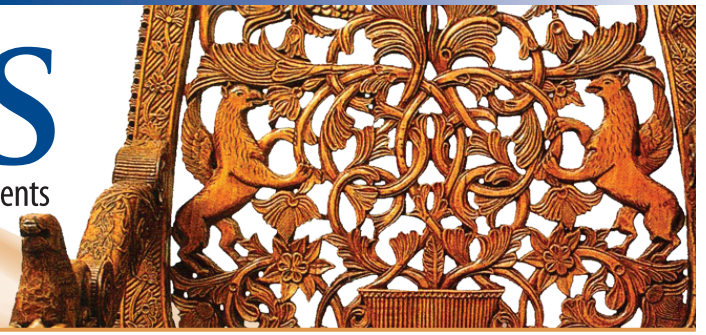


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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In God We Trust

By Yossi Katz

WEALTH IS SOMETHING that most people spend their days dreaming about. But how does one actually become wealthy?

In 1999 the executive chairman of Google (then the CEO of Novell), Eric Schmidt, said in an interview with *Forbes*, “Lots of people who are smart and work hard and play by the rules don’t have a fraction of what I have.” Schmidt acknowledged that the scale of inequality generated by the new wealth “makes me uncomfortable.” Why? “I realize I don’t have my wealth because I’m so brilliant. Luck has a lot to do with it.”

Is that so? Does luck actually spur on accumulating great wealth? Perhaps it’s just plain old hard work and effort?

Wealth is generated by God. However, when wealth reaches this world, it is disbursed via two “bank accounts” called the “time account” and the “place account.” For example, there are seasons when a person is financially successful, and other times when business is simply dead. A person may do very well at one location and dreadful at another. This is all due to how Divine bounty is filtered down to our world.

Very often we mistakenly think, “What if He forgot about me this month?” We begin worrying and using all our mental faculties to brainstorm about how to salvage our predicament. We might even lower ourselves to doing backbreaking labor or various other unworthy tasks, all in the hope of making a few bucks. In reality, we’re just pushing the envelope while gaining nothing. God is ready, willing and able to help – but right now is either not the time or the place for His blessing. A little patience (and some prayer) is all that’s needed.

Our Rabbis also teach that in order to receive our personal “disbursement,” we must first create a “vessel”

to hold our bounty. We create this vessel by dedicating effort toward earning a living. How much effort should we contribute? The Kotzker Rebbe once remarked that we were cursed with the words “By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). But there is no mitzvah to fulfill the curse with absolute dedication! Thankfully, even minimal effort satisfies this curse’s requirements.

This is why our *parashah* says, “God your Lord will bless you in all that you do” (Deuteronomy 15:18). This implies that even if all you do is very little, still, you will be blessed.

But it goes even further. The source of wealth is God, and God is above time and place. By remembering and being faithful to the true Source of wealth while engaging in our efforts, we connect our work with the ultimate source of income and expedite the whole process. However, by worrying and overworking, we sink further into the restrictions of time and place and distance ourselves further from the Source, making things even more challenging and time-consuming.

Haven’t we all invested enormous effort into a project, thinking for certain we would succeed, only to be utterly disappointed? And haven’t we laughed at other, simpler efforts and then witnessed tremendous success? So why can’t we just sit back and enjoy the show?

The secret ingredient to wealth is *bitachon* (trust in God). *Bitachon* is so great that one who has it need not make any other effort whatsoever! That being said, *bitachon* is our main vessel. The more we learn to trust in God, the more we can rely on His blessing and concentrate our lives on spiritual matters. For starters, we can begin by simply thanking God and remembering the many times He has helped until now. In this way, we will merit both material and spiritual wealth. Amen!

Based on Likutey Halakhot, Ribit 3

Longing for the Land

By Yehudis Golshevsky

THERE WAS ONCE a prisoner sentenced to a very long time in jail. Although he had left behind a comfortable, well-furnished home, he became so used to his life in prison that when asked where his home was, he pointed to his cell.

When this prisoner took a careful account of his life, however, he remembered that he had a beautiful home waiting for him on the outside. He felt pained and filled with homesickness. At such times, when people would ask him where he lived, he would tell them about his home outside the penitentiary. He would wax eloquent: "My house is so beautiful. It's in such and such place, and is very large and well-appointed. To my regret, I am imprisoned in this hard, cold place ... for now."

Reb Levi Yitzchak Bender told this parable to explain the mistaken mentality of those who live outside Eretz Yisrael and never long to leave their exile and come to their real home.

One of Rebbe Nachman's daughters was married to the Rav of Chmelnik. Another daughter wed the son of the Rav of Volochisk.

For forty years, the Rabbi of Volochisk's yearning to go to the Land of the Israel was the recurring theme of his conversation.

The Rav of Volochisk was constantly yearning to go to Eretz Yisrael. For forty years, his yearning for the Land was the recurring theme of his conversation. But this yearning did not find favor in the eyes of the Rav of Chmelnik. "What is all this noise about longing and yearning for forty years to go to Eretz Yisrael?" he asked. "You get the money together, and you go!"

When this remark was repeated to Rebbe Nachman, he said, "The Rav of Volochisk, who is yearning so fiercely for forty years, will make it to Eretz Yisrael. But the Rav of Chmelnik, who said that one merely takes money and travels, will never step foot in the Holy Land!"

That is exactly what happened.

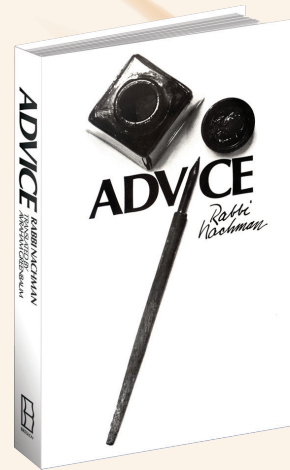
May we all yearn and finally merit returning "home" very soon. Amen!

Based on Siach Sarfey Kodesh VI:388, II:122, III:542

SIDEPATH

Advice (Likutey Etzot) translated by Avraham Greenbaum

MONEY AND LIVELIHOOD. 8. A person who is sunk in the craving for wealth is not just enslaved to one kind of idolatry, but to every single idolatrous cult belonging to all seventy nations of the world. This is because all



forms of idolatry are rooted in materialism. Again and again, the Shekhinah cries out in pain because of these idolatries: "Woe for the pain in my head! Woe for the pain in my arm!" (*Sanhedrin* 46b). There are seventy cries (corresponding to the seventy nations) for the pain in the head, and seventy for the pain in the arm, equalling 140. This corresponds to the numerical value of the word *MaMON* (money)

[including one unit for each letter].

9. By contemplating the spiritual source from which material wealth and blessings flow, the desire for material wealth is dissipated. Because here at the root, radiant with translucent light, the joy is purely spiritual. By comparison, the object of the craving is very degraded. Only a fool would throw aside spiritual joy for the sake of some crude pleasure. ... When a person has sanctified himself and his body, he can contemplate Godliness. This explains why the basic remedy for the desire for wealth is through fulfillment of the covenant. When a person achieves this, he will not fall into this desire (*Likutey Moharan* I, 23:5).



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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.

Dedicated in the Memory of (L'Ilui Nishmat) Yehudis bat Shimon