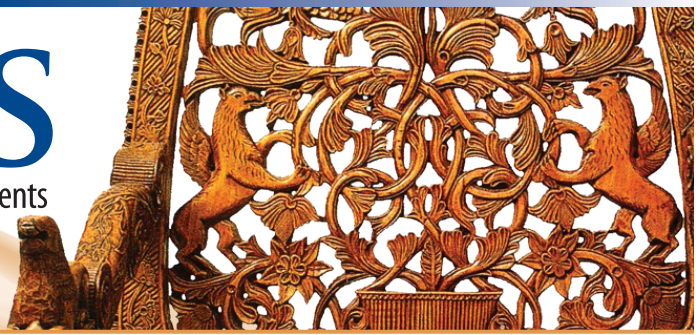


# PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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## The True You

By Yossi Katz

**“GOD SAID TO Abram, ‘Go for yourself from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father’s house, to the Land that I will reveal to you’”** (Genesis 12:1).

Who are you? Have you ever considered what is your true essence? When someone calls your name, what are they referring to? Do they mean your good looks, your designer clothes or maybe a prestigious job or position?

Rebbe Nachman teaches, “Man’s principal essence – that which man calls ‘I’ – is the soul. She is the essence that is eternal” (*Likutey Moharan* I, 22:5).

The words *Lekh lekha* literally mean “Go to yourself.” With these words, God taught Abraham how to become the spiritual father of our people. In order to grow and flourish spiritually, we need to take an inward-bound journey to discover ourselves. We start to grow by first discerning and understanding our own personal spiritual nature. What is my spiritual DNA? What are my strengths, and how do I personally connect to God?

Our souls are eternal; they are a portion of God above and are our actual reality. When we are able to tune into the portion that each of us was specifically given, and be attentive to her spiritual needs, we can begin to grow and connect with our real selves.

What stops us? What is the source of our distraction and disconnect?

The verse states, “Go ... from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father’s house.”

We live on a secular planet. For one, our society promotes all kinds of shallow pleasures and desires. Besides these, society fosters false beliefs and attitudes, redefining such things as true success and the need for personal honor and glorification. In order to truly find ourselves, we must divest ourselves of attitudes that are not sourced

in the Torah and that cause us to become distanced and unconnected with our true selves.

Our upbringing, too, exerts a tremendous influence on who we are. From cradle to grave, our families affect our outlook and goals. Reb Noson explains that inasmuch as our evil desires are one of our greatest obstacles, the influence of other people is the greatest danger we face.

The Torah is teaching us that ultimately, only we can discover our true spiritual path. And only once we realize this can we begin our spiritual journey.

Rebbe Nachman adds that we can find help and support in our quest by taking the time to talk to God every single day. *Hitbodedut* offers us a wonderful opportunity to evaluate where we’re going, how far we’ve come, and the best ways to find our true spiritual selves.

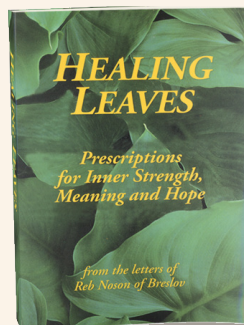
The verse concludes, “to the Land that I will reveal to you.” If we will be stubborn and resilient in our search for truth, God will certainly lead us to the Promised Land.

*Based on Likutey Halakhot Pesach 9, and Hilkhot Geneivah 8:7-8*

## HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell



Even when the gates are closed and locked on every side and in every corner – so that one might mistakenly think that there is no hope, God forbid – I still believe that there remains plenty of hope! For God’s capacity to send relief and deliverance is very great indeed, and His power of salvation is inexhaustible! (*Letter #314*)

# The Loyal Messenger

By Yehudis Golshevsky

**THERE WAS ONCE** a king who wished to send secret messages to a fellow monarch, but the only route passed through a hostile neighboring kingdom. The enemy king was always on guard, fearing a conspiracy between his allied neighbors.

The king's first messenger was exceedingly wise. He passed through the enemy kingdom and never blew his cover; no one suspected a thing. The second messenger was less adept. He was questioned and almost arrested. Only his great physical prowess enabled him to escape captivity and certain torture.

Unfortunately, the third messenger was neither wise nor strong, and he was apprehended. It wasn't long before they began torturing him to extract what they suspected he knew. They promised him great reward if he would only divulge the message he had memorized.

Despite the excruciating pain and their tempting offers, he held his tongue. The only thing they heard from him was that he was innocent, that he couldn't tell them what he didn't know. He was so immovable that his captors eventually decided he really must be innocent and let him go. He went on to deliver his message to his king's ally, and returned home.

The king and his court discussed which of these messengers deserved the greatest reward. Some said the first messenger was the worthiest, since he was so wise that he had eluded detection altogether. Others felt that the second man was the most commendable, since even after being captured, he had managed to escape.

But the king had a different view. "The third messenger is clearly the most deserving. He endured torture, knowing full well that any time he wished he could end it and be rewarded, yet he held fast. He is the one who will be most richly rewarded."

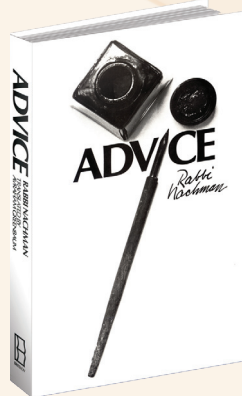
Rebbe Nachman taught that steadfastness is a more praiseworthy quality than natural wisdom and native strength. Both of the latter capacities are gifts; either you have them or you don't. But holding on in trying circumstances out of loyalty to the King is purely an act of will. And, as Reb Noson taught, "Your will is free." What you do with your will really proves who and what you are.

*Based on Maggid Sichos, p. 9*

## SIDEPATH

**Advice (Likutey Etzot) translated by Avraham Greenbaum**

**MONEY AND LIVELIHOOD.** 23. The effect of trade and commerce is to cause all kinds of goods and materials to move around from one set of hands to the next. All the complex movements backwards and forwards depend entirely on the sparks of holiness within the objects themselves. There are times when a certain object has to pass from one person's hands to another's



and then return to the hands of the first. The determining factor is the Divine sparks within the objects and their relation with the Divine soul and spirit of the individuals concerned (*Likutey Moharan I, 54:2*).

24. Craving for money puts power into the hands of the forces of wickedness – the domain of Haman the Amalekite, who constantly harries the Side of Holiness.

In direct opposition to this, the forces of wickedness constantly hunger after money, swallowing the sparks of holiness hidden in the money and rooted in the Supernal Colors. The more a person breaks his lust for money and draws closer to the wisdom of Torah, the more he releases the holy sparks from the forces of wickedness. The power to achieve this is drawn from the Tzaddikim, who are truly devoted to Torah. They have the power to humble the forces of wickedness, and release all the trapped sparks and make of them Torah (*ibid. I, 56:5*).



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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.*