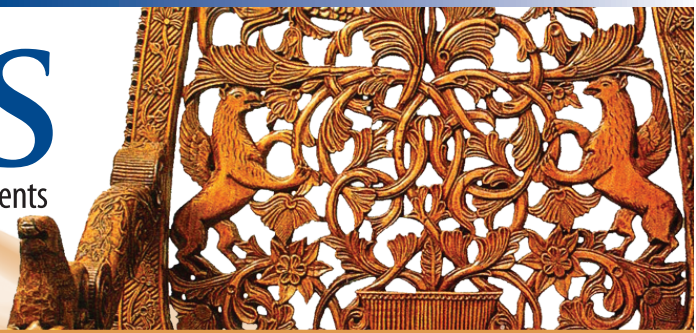


# PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

PARASHAT NASO • 5780 • VOL. 10 NO. 31

📧 [breslov.org/pathways](http://breslov.org/pathways)



## Get Smart

By Yossi Katz

**WHAT MAKES ONE** smart? Most people would say that being smart means knowing “a lot of stuff”—like mechanics, chemistry, algebra, finance, and so on. But the prophet Jeremiah says, “Let the wise man not glory in his wisdom...but let him glory in this, that he understands and knows Me” (Jeremiah 9:22-23). In actuality, the only true knowledge is knowledge of God. Why is this so?

Our Sages teach, “Who is wise? He who perceives the end result” (*Tamid* 32a). If we consider our future, we realize that we exist in this world on a physical level for only a short time. Our Sages describe this world as being similar to a corridor that one passes through in order to get to his destination. The true purpose of this world is as a staging ground in which we develop spiritually, thus preparing for our eternal existence. Our every action either develops our spiritual awareness and sensitivity, or further conceals it.

No matter how much we might know, even if we’re considered intellectually brilliant, how much is it all worth if it only blinds us from reality? Consider science. On the one hand, science demonstrates the great profundity of God’s creation. But on the other hand, many people can get lost in its details and mistakenly believe that things happened just by chance. Can this possibly be called “wise”?

The true champions of wisdom are the great tzaddikim. They have worked intensely to divorce themselves from all material and sensual distractions, and are freed even down here to develop their spiritual existence. Before they act, they carefully consider the resulting outcome,

and they are exceedingly adept in knowing how to transform every encounter into something positive. These great tzaddikim are called “wise men” because they are privy to true reality; they are the only ones who can properly train us for this world. The closer we are to the true tzaddikim, the greater our ability to develop ourselves spiritually and utilize this world for its ultimate purpose.

How does one merit to discover, believe in, and attach oneself to these great tzaddikim? The answer is to become a little bit like them.

Our *parashah* states, “When a man or woman will make a vow to be a Nazirite to God...” (Numbers 6:2). One who takes a simple oath and immediately fulfills it separates himself just a little from the materialism of his worldly existence.

This is true not just about one who vows to abstain from some physical pleasure, but even one who vows to give charity. Since this money could have been used to purchase something that would give him pleasure, he has now given away this enjoyment for the sake of God. By doing so, he undergoes a transformation and is able to join the “league” of the tzaddikim who are truly divorced from the materialism of this world.

The above verse therefore uses the term “will make a vow,” which can also translate as “will make a wondrous oath.” The process of making an oath is truly wondrous because it transforms the one who says it from being a “wise guy” to one who is worthy of receiving true enlightenment, also known as “wondrous wisdom” (*Sefer Yetzirah* 1:1). Let’s get smart!

*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Shabbat 6*

# A Mother's Prayer

By Yehudis Golshevsky

**ONCE REB SHIMON** learned an important lesson about the power of simple prayer from his Rebbe. When his young son fell dangerously ill, Reb Shimon ran to Rebbe Nachman, begging him to pray for the boy's recovery. But Rebbe Nachman didn't answer ... he just stood there, silent. Reb Shimon returned home to attend to his ailing child.

That night, the boy reached a crisis – he was literally struggling for his life. His distraught parents could do nothing to help him. At that moment, Reb Shimon's wife stood up and called out to Heaven, "Master of the universe! Father! My Father in Heaven! See my pain, see the child's suffering! Have mercy on us and heal him!"

The next day at dawn, Reb Shimon knocked at Rebbe Nachman's door again, asking him to pray for the child.

Rebbe Nachman ran to the door to greet him. "See the greatness of a simple prayer and how powerful it is!" the Rebbe cried. "The child's life was already over by Heavenly decree, yet your wife's fervent prayer drew down a complete recovery for your son! And not only that, but she managed to draw down for him many good years. He's going to live a good, long life!"

Indeed, the child recovered completely, and lived to the age of nearly one hundred!

Reb Shimon himself lived a long life as well, finishing out his years in the holy city of Tzefat. At a certain point, he had to return to Europe to arrange a match for one of his sons. He arrived in Ukraine not long before Shavuot, and naturally traveled to Breslov to spend the festival with his fellow chassidim.

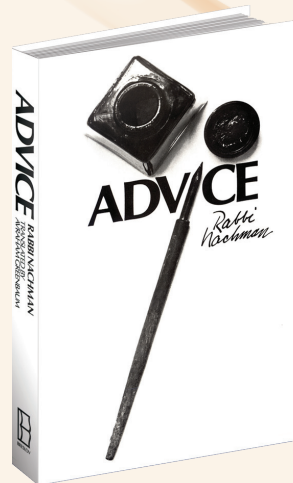
Reb Shimon had been Rebbe Nachman's first and oldest follower, but when he saw Reb Noson essentially leading the new and long-time chassidim, he was amazed by Reb Noson's purity and holiness. He exclaimed, "I thought that Reb Noson was only a student of Rebbe Nachman, but now I see that he is really a rebbe in his own right! And I should know, because I set aside all of the tzaddikim of my time and attached myself to a young boy before he was even married. I know a tzaddik when I see one!"

*Based on Or HaOrot I, pp. 127-128, 136-137*

## SIDEPATH

*Advice (Likutey Etzot) translated by Avraham Greenbaum*

**BARRIERS.** 8. The greatest barriers of all are those in the mind. The heart is slippery. People do not concentrate their entire heart and mind on the true importance of what they need to achieve. For example, when someone wants to travel to the tzaddik and starts



experiencing difficulties, if he really concentrated his whole heart and mind on the fact that his entire life and being and that of all his descendants depend on his reaching his goal, nothing in the world could stop him. None of the barriers would be of any significance at all in his eyes. The main barrier is that people are not firm in their own minds. A person may have reached the tzaddik in spite of all

the obstacles. But if some little doubt then arises in his mind and his heart begins to falter as a result, this is the biggest obstacle of all.

The same is true of prayer. There are many barriers to prayer. A person may succeed in overcoming all of them and praying as he should. But once doubts about God or about the tzaddikim arise in the crookedness of his heart, this is the worst obstacle of all. The way to fight it is to cry out to God with a voice that rises from the very depths of the heart (*Likutey Moharan I, 46*).



**breslov.org**

PO Box 5370 • Jerusalem, Israel • 972.2.582.4641

PO Box 587 • Monsey, NY 10952 • 1.800.33.BRESLOV

*Pathways* is a weekly publication. To subscribe, please visit [breslov.org/pathways](http://breslov.org/pathways). To make a dedication, please email [pathways@breslov.org](mailto:pathways@breslov.org).

© 2020 Breslov Research Institute

*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 for the speedy and complete recovery of Reb Chaim Menachem ben Leah*