



Breslov Research Institute



Dvar Torah for 10th of Tevet

"Yaakov lived in Egypt for 17 years" (Genesis 47:28).

A brief attempt at an appreciation of Reb Noson, o.b.m.

Rashi points out that in a Torah scroll Parshat VaYechi is "closed" rather than "open." (Sort of like starting in the middle of a line rather than in a new paragraph.) Rashi offers two reasons for this. One, that when Yaakov Avinu (our Patriarch) died the eyes and the ears of the Jews were closed as a result of the subjugation that then began. Two, Yaakov Avinu wanted to tell his children when the exile would end, but it was hidden from him.

The 10th of Tevet, a fast day commemorating the beginning of the end—the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem that ended with the destruction of the Temple—is the anniversary of the passing of Reb Noson. Reb Noson was Rebbe Nachman's primary disciple, and it is thanks to him that we have whatever we have from Rebbe Nachman. (Rebbe Nachman himself said so.)

When a Jewish leader dies we lose some of our perception and sensitivity to God's presence, awareness that a true leader instills by example and by teaching. When we lose these we are in danger of becoming workers for other, non-Jewish values. So the one who could tell us "when will it all end" cannot tell us. We have lost the tools to receive his message.

Reb Noson was a true Jewish leader. He traveled across Ukraine constantly, sharing Rebbe Nachman's teachings, and raising funds to perpetuate Rebbe Nachman's writings, so that those who would come later—you and me—would be able to benefit from them.

Reb Noson was so dedicated to his mission not only because he was present for many of Rebbe Nachman lessons. He was dedicated because he cherished Rebbe Nachman's life and efforts to live Jewishly. Reb Noson observed and absorbed those lessons and understood their value.

If you know someone who lives a genuine Jewish life, take note and watch closely. You may not learn exactly when the exile will end, but your eyes and heart will be opened to God's continuous presence.

Have an easy and meaningful fast.

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