

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and his students

RIP DOWN ALL HATRED!

By Ozer Bergman

In one of his lessons (LM II, 73), Rebbe Nachman points out a secret message concerning *Tehilim* (Psalms) and *teshuvah* (return to God) that is hidden in the first verse of *Sefer Shemot* (Book of Exodus). The letters of the words *TeHiLIM* and *TeShUVaH* are embedded within a reference to the Children of Israel who descended to Egypt (see *Parashah Pearls* on this page). *Tehilim*, as we know, is King David's personal outpouring of the heart, his private prayers that have become everyone's. This implies that we Jews are prayer and *teshuvah*. It also implies that individually—and certainly collectively—we all have within ourselves the ability to return from anything, even from the quicksand of Egypt (see *Shemot Rabbah* 1:10 on Exodus 1:11).

In a different lesson (LM II, 7), Rebbe Nachman teaches that the more Jews there are, the closer the world comes to redemption. Why? Because the Torah's light can be transmitted and held onto by the world only if there are 600,000 or more Jews. However, that alone is insufficient. As you recall, another condition needed for the Torah to be given was unity. The Israelites had to be like an individual at peace with himself, with a clear goal and a firm resolve—and they were.

The Rebbe supplies another reason why redemption comes closer as the number of Jews increases. God made us neighbors so we should get together and pray together. A minyan's growth adds and extends the reach of each prayer, so that more and more of Creation receives Divine bounty. A major point of all this prayer is that the Torah should not just be written, studied and discussed, but breathed and lived at every moment, be what may, come what may.

One of the nice things about living alone is that no one disputes your decisions. Your viewpoint and opinion are automatically

right. But "it is not good that the human is alone" (Genesis 2:18). Yet once there is another human being, opinions abound. When there are more and more Jews—and may there always be a continuing increase of Jews!—the challenge to unity is greater (and the benefits of having it, greater still). Deciding what's right and who's right can become matters of intense, heated and contentious debate. There, in the face of fracture and division, we are called upon to make peace and to follow the Divine rules for creating and maintaining peace. This keeps us, and the Torah, on.

Putting these ideas together, we see that the more Jews there are, (a) the more Torah can be brought into the world, and (b) the greater the power of prayer. Both are contingent on our getting along with one another. So we have to be careful to make sure there is *shalom* (peace) among us. Particularly in regard to prayer, our *shalom* has to be so true that we want to pray together and can pray together. This brings us not only to *teshuvah*, but to forgiveness as well.

In order to be and remain peaceful, neighborly neighbors, *halakhah* (Jewish law) requires us to respect each other's privacy, even forcing us to build walls to separate us, if the circumstances require it. Why? Even a person who lives alone needs self-discipline in order to maintain a healthy life and lifestyle. If we get too close for comfort to one another, we are likely to cause harm in either, or both, of the following ways. We may be jealous of what our neighbor has, or, equally bad (at least), we may express impatience for what we view as his insufferable and inadequate practice of Judaism. Then walls are a very good thing: they help us maintain self-discipline so we won't harm one another.

*a gutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!*

(Based on *Likutey Halakhot,
Nizkei Shekheinim* 4:2-4)

SIDEPATH

Even a drop of good is never lost! Never! Our Sages teach: "If you've searched and succeeded in finding, believe it" (*Megillah* 6b). Why "believe it"? If I've found, then I know it. What's the point in believing?

But, this is the point. No matter how much you seek the good, you may think you haven't yet achieved or attained any. You might feel yourself even more distant from your goal than you were before you started. With this in mind, our Sages specifically taught: Believe it! Believe that you've found some good, even if you can't see it! (LH, *Birkhot HaPeirot* 5:1, 2).

PARASHAH PEARLS

By Chaim Kramer

1:1 And these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family

The Power Of Psalms

The final letters of the first five words of this verse, *ve'eileH shemoT bnei Yisrael haba'im* (וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים), and these are the names of the sons of Israel who came), spell *TeHiLIM* (תְּהִלִּים, Psalms). The final letters of the next five words of the verse, *MitzrayimaH eT Ya'akov iSh ubeitO* (מִצְרַיִם וְיַעֲקֹב אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ), to Egypt, with Jacob, each with his family), spell *TeShUVaH* (תְּשׁוּבָה, repentance). Moreover, the names of Jacob's twelve sons are composed of forty-nine letters, corresponding to the Forty-Nine Gates of Repentance. All of this indicates that when a person recites Psalms, his prayerful words are directed to the specific Gate of Repentance that he requires (LM II, 73).

1:7 The Jewish people were fertile and prolific. They increased and grew very, very mighty

We Are United At Our Source

The six words in this verse allude to the Jewish women giving birth to sextuplets (Rashi).

Each set of sextuplets was united at its source; thus, causing harm to even one of the siblings could harm them all. This can be understood more broadly as indicating that all Jews are united at their source (LM I, 69). Any kind of damage caused by strife to one Jew harms all Jews, particularly in financial matters.

1:11 They were to build up the cities of Pitom and Ra'amses as treasure cities

We Must Build Our Homes On A Foundation Of Wisdom

These cities kept collapsing and had to be rebuilt continually (*Sotah* 11a).

The Talmudic statement is supported by the word *MiSKeNot* (מִסְכָּנוֹת, treasure), which connotes both *SaKaNaH* (סִכְנָה, danger) and *MiSKeiN* (מִסְכִּין, poor).

A person must build his home on a foundation of wisdom: the wisdom of the Torah (LM I, 266; *Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom* #60). If he fails to do so, he leaves his home spiritually impoverished and in danger of spiritual collapse. But when he builds his home with wisdom, he creates a spiritual "treasure city."

2:6 The boy was crying

Self-Renewal Keeps A Person Young

Na'ar (boy) literally means "young man." Moses always looked at himself as a young man, especially when he cried out to God. Even when he grew old, he always renewed himself, as it is written, "His eyes had not dimmed or his natural vigor abated" (Deuteronomy 34:7) (LH I, p. 77a).

2:14 Surely the reason is known

Strife Among Jews Leads To Exile

Moses said, "I always wondered why the Jews are condemned to suffer in exile more than the other nations. But now that I see they fight among themselves, I understand the reason" (Rashi).

Are the Jews the only ones who engage in strife? Look at the continuous wars, political battles, and dog-eat-dog business ethics of the other nations. Why does strife cause the Jews to suffer more?

In truth, the Jews have a loftier calling: they have been chosen to reveal God's glory in the world. Being connected to honor, they must

act even more honorably and respectably towards one another. When strife abounds within the Jewish community, it deflects God's glory, resulting in exile and all the suffering that accompanies it (LH VIII, p. 279a-279b-280a).

2:23 The Jewish people groaned from their labor and cried out

Prayer Should Be Our First Response

Any exodus from trouble or suffering begins with one's cries and prayers to God (LH V, p. 332).

3:6 Moses hid his face

Reach For The Heights While Recognizing Your Limits

There is an aspect of the Keter in each one of us. This Keter is the power of the mind to reach for great heights, but at the same time recognize its inability to exceed its boundaries (LM I, 24). This is known as *ha-mesader ve-ha-meyashev et ha-mo'ach* (the power to compose and order the mind). Thus, Moses knew to hide his face after witnessing Godliness.

We practice the same aspect in our daily prayers. After the *Amidah*, we recite *Tachanun*—after reciting the Eighteen Benedictions and standing before God, we fall down and cover our faces. After attaining a high level of contact with Godliness, we must then "hide our faces" (LH I, p. 396).

3:13 What is His Name

We Cannot Serve God Without Knowing Him

People are always saying, "Oh, God!" But what does this mean? One must really know of God and His Name in order to recognize Him and serve Him (LH I, p. 444).

5:3 The God of the Hebrews

With Faith, We Can Overcome All Doubts

The Jews are called *IVRim* (עִבְרִיִּים, Hebrews) because with their faith they *OVeir* (עוֹבֵר, get past) all their doubts and the challenges to their faith (LM I, 64:2).

KITZUR L" M WEEKLY

8 — "I looked, and behold, a golden candelabra" (Zechariah 4:2)
(continued)

6. The way to separate out the good from the bad in oneself is through Torah study and prayer. More specifically, by studying the Codes and by clarifying the law, a person separates and sifts out the good from the bad. He also expels and nullifies the evil in himself in all of the four elements which subsume all the various character traits. This is the main way for a person to perfect himself. But the way to merit [the intellect necessary] to clarify the law is through prayer. Furthermore, when a person prays for something, even though his request has been fulfilled as a result of his prayer, the thing which he has asked for exists only in potential. Through Torah study, his request is completed and goes from potential to actual. In this way, his will is then accomplished and his request fulfilled, and he will merit to bring about the total demise of the enemies and opponents.

7. The wellspring of Torah wisdom emanates from prayer. Therefore, the only way to merit to clarify the law is through prayer. [When a person studies in this manner,] it is considered as if he created the world anew. Furthermore, he merits to sift the good from the bad in all of the four elements, which effectively constitutes the rectification of everything. He is then able to completely subdue the opponents.



Jerusalem, Israel
Tel: 972.2.582.4641 • Fax: 972.2.582.5542

North America:
POB 587 • Monsey, NY 10952-0587
1-800-33-BRESLOV
Tel: 732.534.7263 • Fax: 732.608.8461

To subscribe to this weekly publication please visit:
breslov.org/pathways
To dedicate in memory or merit of someone please
email: pathways@breslov.org

YOUR AD HERE