

## Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and his students

### KEEP ON TRUCKIN' – WE'RE GOIN' HOME

By Ozer Bergman

“Moshe wrote their goings out for their journeying at the word of God” (Numbers 33:2).

Trick question: What is the opposite of *sinat chinam* (baseless hatred)? If you said *ahavat chinam* (baseless love), you're wrong. There is no such thing. If there were, it would mean loving even the most vile, violent, cruel and deadly human animals that ever disgraced the planet and mankind. There is no such mitzvah. What is the opposite of *sinat chinam*? *Shalom* (peace).

In *Likutey Moharan* I, 40, Rebbe Nachman writes that “*This* is the travelogue of the Children of Israel” (Numbers 33:1) is the *tikkun* (rectification) for “Israel, *this* [golden calf] is your god” (Exodus 32:4). What was the underlying flaw that led to such a heretical pronouncement? A lack of faith in Moshe Rabbeinu.

When some had thought that Moshe was never coming back from Mount Sinai, they felt no need to continue following the path that he had outlined. Nor did they feel any need to consult Moshe's closest disciples about what should be done. They were smart enough, they thought, to know how to be Jewish on their own. *Oy!* They ended up with a golden calf for which we are still suffering (*Sanhedrin* 102a).

That's also why we Jews have been wandering in exile, privately and collectively, for a few thousand years. As always, God's intention is for our benefit. Anytime and anywhere we travel—on land, sea or air; by foot, horseback, car, train, jet or boat—He wants each of us to remember to become at least a little bit stronger in *emunat chakhamim* (faith in genuine tzaddikim). What does a walk around the block or commuting to work have to do with *emunat chakhamim*?

Wherever you go, wherever you step, stand or sit, you can elevate that place to God. But you can't do it on your own. We both know that even standing at the Kotel on a Friday night, our minds can wander to the foreign

and bizarre. Certainly if, God forbid, we were to find ourselves in a bar, we would be hard-pressed to focus on anything sacred. The only way we can maintain a sacred focus is to have faith in the teachings of genuine tzaddikim. Believing and bearing in mind that they are the ones who are fit to lead us, gives us the ability to follow their lead.

Because another reason we are in exile is to “complete” the Torah. Many think that the Torah ends with the Written Torah, or the Talmud, Kabbalah, etc. Not so. The Torah is incomplete. As history evolves and humankind moves closer to Utopia—the coming of Mashiach—we Jews need more and more Torah—advice and suggestions on how to live with genuine Jewish values, even as the world around us becomes more fractured and insane. When we believe that there exist authentic *chakhamim* who are worthy and capable of guiding us, their words have meaning and become Torah.

There is an unexpected benefit from following their lead wherever we go. Because such *chakhamim* increase *shalom* in the world (*Berakhot* 64a), the world becomes more unified. *When* we have faith in such *chakhamim*, people become less jealous about possessions and territory, less insistent on the differences between themselves and “others,” and more aware of the sameness that unites us. *When* we have such faith.

Moshe Rabbeinu was so able to re-instill *emunat chakhamim* in us that he included our desert travels in the Torah. He brought us to believe that God's will for mankind is contained in the Torah. So as we traveled, we focused our minds on the Ark and its contents, the Ten Commandments, ready to live by God's will wherever we would go and wherever we would stop. When we'll travel like that, with *emunat chakhamim* and focused on the Torah, we'll bring *shalom* to the world and make it into one big Eretz Yisrael. Amen.

*a gutn Shabbos!  
Shabbat Shalom!*

—Based on *Likutey Halakhot*,  
*Pikadon* 5:19-23

### SIDEPATH

Why is there depression, sadness and suffering? Our Sages teach: Whoever mourns Jerusalem will yet share in its rejoicing (*Ta'anit* 30b). Without experiencing sorrow and mourning, there is no way for us to appreciate its opposite. We have nothing with which to compare our happiness. Therefore, we must experience suffering. Only then can we know the true taste of joy (*Crossing the Narrow Bridge*).

### PARASHAH PEARLS

By Chaim Kramer

**30:2 This is the word that God has commanded**

**Moses Knew There Is No Way To Fully Understand God**

All the other prophets gazed into a mirror that does not shine, whereas Moses gazed into a mirror that does shine (*Yevamot* 49b).

All the prophets other than Moses perceived images and manifestations of God, which they related to as if they provided Infinite Knowledge. But this was an unclear view, corresponding to the verse “The whole earth is filled with His glory” (Isaiah 6:3)—i.e., the manifestation of Godliness via our realm of being.

Moses, however, attained a clear perception of Godliness on the level of the *sefirah* of Keter, which is associated with the word *MaH* (מה, what). In other words, he attained the knowledge that there is no way to fully understand God's Infinite Being. Therefore he always asked, “What?”—meaning, “What else can I find out about God?” (LM II, 7:8).

**31:6 Moses sent them...to the army together with Phineas**

**Don't Be Fooled By The Wicked**

Phineas flew in the air, as did Balaam (*Targum Yonatan* on Numbers 31:8).

For every deed performed by a tzaddik, we can find similar acts performed by the wicked. One can be easily fooled into thinking

that a wicked person is righteous after witnessing his successes and performance of miracles. But in the end, though the damage the wicked do is considerable, the righteous always prevail (LH I, p. 282).

### 31:23 Everything that goes into fire, you should pass through fire

#### *We Must Transform Our Lust For This World Into Passion for God*

A person should always beseech God to purify his heart.

If he has already begun serving God, he should increase his devotions with renewed passion. But if until now he has been burning with lust for the things of this world, he must transform that desire into a passion for the service of God. Thus, “everything that goes into fire”—the fire of lust—“you should pass through fire”—you must transform it into a passionate devotion to God (LM I, 156:1).

### 33:1 These are the travels

#### *Idolatry And Lack Of Faith Lead To Travel*

Because the Jews sinned with *EiLeH Elokekha* (אלה אלהיך, *These are your gods*) (Exodus 32:4), they had to experience *EiLeH masei* (אלה מסעי, *These are the travels*) (*Asarah Ma'amarot; Yalkut Reuveini, Mas'ei*).

Idolatry and lack of faith lead to travel and exile (although there are other reasons for travel as well). For if a person had faith that God could provide him with all his needs wherever he is, he would not have to travel elsewhere for his livelihood. Thus, a journey indicates a blemish in faith, which is an aspect of idolatry.

When a person does travel, however, he can rectify his blemished faith. Moreover, blemished faith causes exile. Above, for the Divine Presence goes into exile due to man's sins. Through the person's own exile, he can rectify the exile of the Divine Presence (LM I, 40).

However, this is effective only if one guards himself from sin during his travels. Then he brings about rectifications wherever he goes, as he prays, gives charity, recites blessings, and so forth (*Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom* #85).

#### *Traveling to the Tzaddikim*

The sojourning of the Jews in the desert, their travels and travails, are reflected today in the

travels we undertake when we go to our houses of prayer and when we travel to the tzaddikim (LH VII, p. 150).

### 35:4 One thousand cubits all around

#### *The Power of “Azamra” And “AyeH”*

Two thousand cubits of land surrounded each Levite city. The inner 1,000 cubits were to be left empty for the inhabitants' use. The outer 1,000 cubits were designated for fields and vineyards (Rashi).

*ELePh* (אף, one thousand) is spelled the same as *ALePh* (אף, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet). To truly take refuge from the forces of evil, one needs the two lessons of Rebbe Nachman that begin with the letter *Aleph* (א). The first is *Azamra!* (אזמרה, I will sing), which speaks of finding the good points within oneself (LM I, 282). For the “land” should be planted, and you can find good things to “grow and develop” within yourself. But when you think that things are very bad and you have so many unanswered questions, you must recall the lesson of *AyeH?* (איה, Where) (ibid., II, 12). Even though the “land” seems empty, devoid of Godliness, it is not. It serves a purpose, and God exists even there (LH III, p. 75a).

### 35:6 Six cities of refuge...forty-two cities

#### *The Shema and Shabbat Protect Us From Evil*

The six cities of refuge represent the verse of *Shema Yisrael*, which contains six words. The forty-two cities correspond to the number of words in the passage of *Ve'ahavta* (You should love) (Deuteronomy 6:5-9). Thus, the Shema provides a refuge for the individual who wishes to avoid the “murderer”—the forces of evil.

Each of the cities of refuge was surrounded by an additional 2,000 cubits of land for the planting of trees and shrubbery. These 2,000 cubits allude to the *techum Shabbat* (Shabbat boundary). Shabbat represents faith, which is another means of refuge from evil (LH III, p. 138-70a).

## KITZUR L" M WEEKLY

### 14 — To Draw Peace (continued)

12. Holy fear and awe of God is the most essential factor in prayer. For prayer

substitutes for the sacrifices, and it is written regarding the sacrifices, “Whoever has a blemish shall not draw close” (Leviticus 21:18). [On the other hand,] when a person is without blemish, this is the concept of holy fear, as it is written, “Nothing is lacking for those who fear Him” (Psalms 34:10). Through holy fear, a person merits wholeness and peace (Zohar II, 79)—that is, to have “peace in his bones”—and there is harmony between his body and his soul. Then he will draw close to the pure, untainted service of God and his prayer will be complete. Through prayer, he will merit “overall peace,” which is the perfection of all the worlds. For this reason, prayer is called *KoRban* (sacrifice)—since it effects a *KeiRuV* (a “bringing near”), bringing the worlds closer to their perfection. This is what is meant by “overall peace,” or peace in all the worlds, and this is why we conclude the [*Amidah*] prayer with the word *BaShalom* (with peace).

[This idea is exemplified in Phineas, who achieved “overall peace,” as it is written, “Behold, I give him My covenant of peace” (Numbers 25:12). The prophet Elijah also came to make peace, and Elijah is one and the same personage as Phineas. All this came about through prayer, as it is written, “And Phineas stood up and prayed” (Psalms 106:30).]



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