

# PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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## One in a Thousand

By Yossi Katz

Traditionally, Jewish children start learning *Chumash* from the beginning of this week's *parashah*. One might wonder: Why not start from the beginning of the Torah, from *Bereishit*? There is also something very unusual about the first word of this *parashah*, "*Vayikra*," which is written in the Torah with a small *aleph*. What does this all mean?

Regarding the judgment process in the Heavenly Court, it is written, "If he has an interceding angel, one [positive-speaking angel] out of a thousand [persecuting angels] to attest to a man's righteousness, then He is gracious to him and says, 'Redeem him from descending to the pit; I have found a ransom'" (Job 33:23-24). Our Rabbis have interpreted this verse to mean that even if only one angel comes to a man's defense, and even if, within the defense itself, 999 parts are against the man and in only one part is he deemed meritorious, he is still worthy of being saved.

Similarly, we have the power to look at our friends and at ourselves and make judgments in the same positive way. I may look at myself and discover 999 faults, but if I can find one good point – and, even if within that good point, 999 parts are negative and there is but one point of true good intention – nevertheless, by identifying this tiny goodness, I can leave the negative and begin a new, positive spiritual life. The reason is that the source of true goodness is God Himself. Since God is eternal, any point of goodness, no matter how insignificant, has eternal, permanent power.

Inasmuch as we are each a part of the process of discovering and identifying this Godliness, the Tzaddik is the head of the movement. He has both the ability to discover the good point within us – thus causing us

to feel spiritually free to grow and strive – and he also teaches us how we can appreciate and live joyfully with these good points.

In building the Golden Calf, the Jewish People fell into a sin that is considered to include all three capital offenses – bloodshed, idol-worship and illicit relations. The nation that had just heard the Ten Commandments from God Himself now felt utterly lost and rotten. But Moses the great Tzaddik interceded on our behalf. He pleaded with God to see the speck of goodness that remained within us. As a result of this successful plea, God commanded us to build the Tabernacle. Upon its completion, God called out to Moses from the place of the small *aleph*.

*Aleph* has the numerical value of 1. As we have seen, even if the good point is only a thousandth part good, and even if this thousandth is surrounded by 999 negative points, nevertheless, this goodness is eternal. This goodness is the small *aleph*. Just as the Jews built a physical Tabernacle, so too, the Tzaddik builds a parallel, supernal Tabernacle powered by the goodness contained within each one of us. It is from this place that, even after the sin of the Golden Calf, God was able to still speak to Moses. It is from this place of goodness that the innocent *cheder* boy receives his spiritual vitality, and from this place of goodness within us that a soon-to-be-born spiritual child can grow up.

We are all children of God. Therefore we each have the potential – no matter how distant we may be – to live a spiritual life of goodness. By attaching ourselves to the Tzaddik and his process of discovering Godliness, we can live with this goodness breath by breath. We will then not only change ourselves, but also make an enduring impact on the entire world. Amen!

*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Eiruvey Techumim 6*

# Justice for All

By Chaim Kramer

At the conclusion of the Pesach Seder we sing the song “*Chad gadya* – One kid.” In contrast to all that we have read in the Haggadah until this point, this song seemingly has nothing to do with the Jewish People’s slavery in Egypt or the miraculous events of the Exodus. Or does it?

Reb Noson explains that this song is a portent of the coming of Mashiach, when God will bring His final judgment on the world. For only God can administer true justice.

Reb Noson writes:

*A kid was bought and was eaten by a cat. A dog bit the cat. A stick beat the dog. Fire consumed the stick and was extinguished by water. An ox drank the water and a slaughterer slew the ox. The Angel of Death slew the slaughterer. Then God slew the Angel of Death.*

{ *Who asked the  
dog to mix in?* }

*The cat did an evil deed. It ate something not belonging to it. The dog administered justice – but who asked the dog to mix in? And so on. The stick, the fire, the water, and so on, all tried to avenge a wrongdoing, but each administered justice according to its ideal. Maybe they were right. But then why were they punished?*

*This teaches us that judgment belongs only to God, and it won’t be until God slays the Angel of Death (i.e. in Messianic times) that true justice will reign (Likutey Halakhot, Rosh Chodesh 6:19).*

What does this mean for us? Until Mashiach comes – may it be soon! – we must do our best to take care of others’ property and to judge others favorably. Then we will have corrected, on our level, the true sense of justice, and will be able to experience this justice even now.

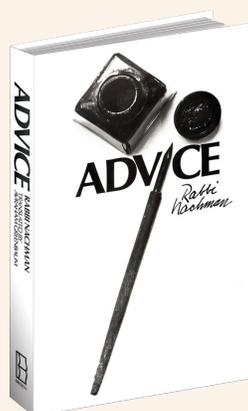
*From “Mashiach: Who? What? Why? How?  
Where? and When?”*

## SIDEPATH

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

**THE COVENANT.** 53. Every Jew has within him a spark of Mashiach. How much it shows through depends on the purity and holiness he attains. He must be very careful not to weaken this spark in any way. The main thing is to guard against the sexual desire, because even the slightest trace of it can seriously affect this spark (*Likutey Moharan* II, 32:2).

54. When husband and wife have relations in purity and holiness, untouched by the slightest flaw, their relations bring unification in the uppermost spheres. This is truly precious (*ibid.* II, 32:4).



55. One who attains absolute purity knows how to send forth the words of prayer like arrows from a bow. His whole being becomes suffused with the spirit of the holy Shabbat. He is totally free. He reaches the ultimate enlightenment. ... He is blessed with wealth and joy. All the passion in his heart is for good. Depression and cynicism have no place. He has the power to go out into the world and bring life to those

caught in the net of degraded passions and irrational fears; in their place, he inculcates them with the love of God and the fear of Heaven. ... So great is his power, it is as if he had created the world. ... The hearts of men are purified, and the age of Mashiach begins to dawn ... (*ibid.* II, 83).

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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.*