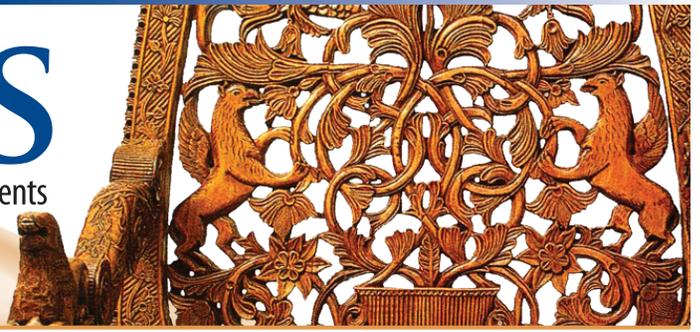


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

PARASHAT KI TAVO • 5778 • VOL. 8 NO. 42

📧 breslov.org/pathways



The Story of Our Lives

By Yossi Katz

ARE YOU HAPPY with your life? Can you say that you've always made the right choices and are proud of everything you've done? If you could turn back the clock, would you do everything the same way again? Don't you wish that life would just proceed in an orderly and successful way?

Preparing for Rosh HaShanah, the Day of Judgment, involves a great deal of introspection. (If you haven't started yet, now may be a good time!) Naturally, as we think back and remember our deeds (or misdeeds), many of these questions nag at us and prey on our conscience. But this is similar to the process described in this week's *parashah*.

When the Holy Temple stood, farmers in Israel would make a special trip each year to Jerusalem. They would bring along their "first fruits," or *bikkurim*, which they placed in a basket to present to the Kohen. Each farmer would declare:

"An Aramean tried to destroy my father. He descended to Egypt and stayed there, few in number. There he became a large, powerful and populous nation. The Egyptians treated us cruelly and harmed us. ... God heard our voice and saw our pain, our toil and our oppression. He took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, with great awe, with signs and with wonders. He brought us to this place and He gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey..." (Deuteronomy 26:5-9).

Declaring this, the farmer presenting his bounty reflected on the awesome place he had arrived at. He was living in his own country, the Holy Land, and was personally bringing his crops to the Holy Temple, the holiest place on earth. What a privilege! But he would

also remember the many setbacks along the way. An Aramean named Laban had continually switched his ancestor Jacob's wages and tried to harm him. His people had been exiled in Egypt as slaves, cruelly oppressed and murdered. Yet despite all this, not only did Laban fail, but Jacob was able to marry both of Laban's precious daughters, who would later give birth to the "perfect offspring," the holy Twelve Tribes. Likewise, in spite of the Egyptian exile, the Jews were redeemed as a great nation, populous and wealthy.

This is the story of our lives, too. The ploys of Laban or Pharaoh are the work of the forces of evil seeking to destroy our faith and trust in the Oneness of God and His perfect plan. We are bombarded by negative thoughts, questioning whether we are really "going anywhere" and if there is any purpose to our actions. Just as Jacob and Moses were victorious, so too, in the end, we will be victorious. But we must first remember that our ancestors did not arrive via a smooth path.

God knew that man was destined to err. Therefore He created *teshuvah* (repentance) before the creation of the world. Furthermore, the Midrash explains that the Torah begins with the word *Bereishit* ("In the beginning" or "At first") because the world was created for the purpose of *reishit* (beginnings). This is represented by the first or beginning fruit (*Bereishit Rabbah* 1:4).

The bringing of the first fruits teaches us how to live a life of ultimate purpose – a life of new beginnings and renewal. We remember that yes, yesterday might have been rough, but just as in the stories of the Torah, God will bring about our ultimate salvation.

Even if someone transgressed the entire Torah thousands of times, there is still hope! It is our job to strengthen our faith, start afresh, and wait for the time when we, too, will experience our redemption. Amen!

Based on Likutey Halakhot, Basar BeChalav 4:13

The Rebbe's Gift

R' ABBA SHOCHET and his son R' Shmuel set out from Tcherin to spend Rosh HaShanah with Rebbe Nachman in Breslov. R' Abba had purchased a very beautiful silver goblet as a gift for the Rebbe.

On the way, they were caught in an abnormally heavy downpour and couldn't find a wagon driver willing to travel in such weather. They soon realized they were in danger of not reaching Breslov in time for the holiday. Finally they found one driver who was willing to take them, but only if R' Abba agreed to his price. The price was exorbitant, but R' Abba agreed. How could he not be with the Rebbe for Rosh HaShanah?!

Much to the disappointment of the two chassidim, the roads were muddy and travel was very difficult. It was already noontime of the day before Rosh HaShanah when they reached Heisin, about 18 miles (30 km) from Breslov. R' Abba pressed the wagon driver, a simple Jew, to drive faster.

After cracking his whip once or twice, the driver called to his horses, "*Nu, kinderlakh. Tzum Rebben!* Come on, children. Hurry to the Rebbe!" Suddenly the horses began traveling faster and faster, and R' Abba and his son arrived in Breslov during the afternoon prayers. They had no time to greet Rebbe Nachman before the holiday.

Later that evening, with all the chassidim gathered around the Rebbe for the *tish* (meal), Rebbe Nachman said to R' Abba, "Abba! Tell us about your journey." R' Abba related the difficulties he and his son had encountered on the way, and admitted he had had no choice but to pay the wagon driver with the silver goblet he had bought for the Rebbe.

"How can I praise you for this journey?" Rebbe Nachman said to R' Abba. "For the goblet, I will knock out the eyes and teeth of Satan. As for you, Abba, there is no reward great enough in this world. And you, R' Shmuel, you get the soup!"

Shortly after Rosh HaShanah, R' Abba passed away. His son, R' Shmuel, turned his hand to business and soon became extremely wealthy. Everyone then understood the greatness of the gift that R' Abba had brought for the Rebbe, and the rewards of such charity!

*Based on Aveneha Barzel, p. 48, #76;
Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-198*

SIDEPATH

Advice (Likutey Etzot) translated by Avraham Greenbaum

PERCEPTIONS OF GODLINESS. 2. When a person "returns" from the state of self-nullification to his normal state of awareness and sense of self, a trace of the awesome light he perceived still remains with him, giving him an apprehension of the unity of the Infinite and His goodness. Now he can understand how all is good and all is one. This awareness is a foretaste of the World to Come. The way to attain these levels of awareness is through expressing oneself before a Torah scholar, confessing one's sins and pouring out one's heart (*Likutey Moharan* I, 4:9).

3. For the tzaddik, repentance is a continuous movement. He works on it every day of his life. Even if he knows that



he has already achieved a state of perfect repentance, he must still "repent" for the perceptions of God he attained in earlier periods of his life, because they were gross and materialistic compared to his present perception of God's utter exaltedness. Every day the tzaddik moves from perception to perception and from level to level, repenting for his earlier levels. The World to Come, which is called "entirely Shabbat, entirely

teshuvah (repentance)," has precisely this quality of movement towards an ever-enhanced perception of God. With every climb a person makes in the level of his perception, it is necessary to repent for his previous levels (*ibid.* I, 6:3).



**BRESLOV
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE**

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. To make a dedication, please email pathways@breslov.org.

© 2018 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 in the Memory of (L'ilui nishmat) Yehudis bat Shimon