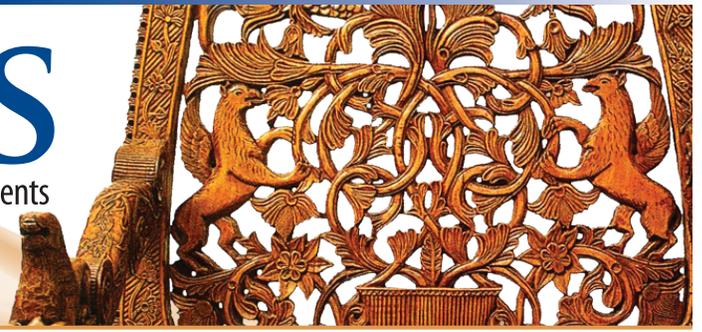


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

PARASHAT BEREISHIT • 5779 • VOL. 9 NO. 2

📧 breslov.org/pathways



Let in the Light!

By Yossi Katz

MAZEL TOV, we have completed the reading of the Torah! Incredibly enough, just a few minutes after finishing a year's worth of reading, following a small celebration, we begin all over again. In this vein, Rebbe Nachman would always encourage his Chassidim to start afresh and never become accustomed to "regular, everyday life." We may have finished the Torah and gleaned much insight, but now we can begin again with fresh eyes and vigor, soon to discover that we haven't really begun to understand the depths of the Torah at all!

The Torah begins by describing Creation, including the verse "God made the two great lights – the greater light [the sun] to rule the day and the lesser light [the moon] to rule the night" (Genesis 1:16). The beginning of the verse calls both luminaries "great," but the end of the verse refers to the moon as "lesser." Rashi explains that they were created equal, but the moon was made smaller because it contended, "It's impossible for two kings to share the same crown."

If we observe the sun and the moon, we discern an obvious difference between them. The sun shines its own light, whereas the moon reflects that light. Kabbalistically, the light of the sun is representative of the Divine. God's blinding light reflects the true reality of the universe, that there exists nothing but Him. This is alluded to in the final letters of the words in the Torah's first verse, *barA ElokiM eT* (God created), which spell *EMeT* (truth). The very purpose of God's Creation was for His true nature to become known down on Earth.

The moon represents our earthly-human existence. Had the moon shone as bright as the sun, the two luminaries would have "shared the same crown." This means that God's light would have burned so brightly that essentially there would have been no difference between Heaven and Earth. God's true reality would permeate Creation in a way that all would be one

angelic existence, but God's desire was for His truth to be reflected in the human experience.

Therefore the moon was made smaller; it no longer shines as brightly as the sun, leaving room for falsehood and doubt. This spiritual darkness is manifest whenever we feel distant, cold or disconnected from God.

Although Creation gave rise to the original darkness, when we misstep or make bad judgment calls, we further compound the problem and are surrounded by even more layers of darkness. Have you ever found yourself in a downward spiral, wanting to get out and do something meaningful, but being badgered by distractions at every turn? Do you want to make that meaningful prayer and begin building a true relationship with God, only to find yourself sidetracked whenever the opportunity presents itself? What is the key to opening our hearts and minds to God's essential reality that we know exists?

Next week's *parashah* states, "Make a light for the ark" (ibid. 6:16). The Hebrew word *teivah* (ark) also means "word." By verbalizing words of prayer with truth and sincerity, we illuminate them and cause them to shine brightly, dispelling the darkness that surrounds us and revealing God's truth. Describing the type of light mentioned in this verse, Rashi says, "Some say it was a window, and some say it was a precious gem." What's the difference? The gem produces its own light, whereas the window allows in light.

Perhaps we aren't up to burning with such tremendous desire for the absolute truth that we dispel all of the darkness on our own. But we can utter a few words of sincere prayer from wherever we stand spiritually and emotionally. Each honest and sincere word we say creates a window that allows in God's light so that the spiritual pathways home are revealed to us. Thus we can ultimately fulfill the purpose of Creation and return the moon to its original glory. Amen!

Based on Likutey Halakhot, Dayanim 3; Likutey Moharan I, 9

A Mother's Prayer

By Yehudis Golshevsky

ONCE REB SHIMON learned an important lesson about the power of simple prayer from his Rebbe. When his young son fell dangerously ill, Reb Shimon ran to Rebbe Nachman, begging him to pray for the boy's recovery. But Rebbe Nachman didn't answer ... he just stood there, silent. Reb Shimon returned home to attend to his ailing child.

That night, the boy reached a crisis – he was literally struggling for his life. His distraught parents could do nothing to help him. At that moment, Reb Shimon's wife stood up and called out to Heaven, "Master of the universe! Father! My Father in Heaven! See my pain, see the child's suffering! Have mercy on us and heal him!"

The next day at dawn, Reb Shimon knocked at Rebbe Nachman's door again, asking him to pray for the child.

Rebbe Nachman ran to the door to greet him. "See the greatness of a simple prayer and how powerful it is!" the Rebbe cried. "The child's life was already over by Heavenly decree, yet your wife's fervent prayer drew down a complete recovery for your son! And not only that, but she managed to draw down for him many good years. He's going to live a good, long life!"

Indeed, the child recovered completely, and lived to the age of nearly one hundred!

Reb Shimon himself lived a long life as well, finishing out his years in the holy city of Tzefat. At a certain point, he had to return to Europe to arrange a match for one of his sons. He arrived in Ukraine not long before Shavuot, and naturally traveled to Breslov to spend the festival with his fellow chassidim.

Reb Shimon had been Rebbe Nachman's first and oldest follower, but when he saw Reb Noson essentially leading the new and long-time chassidim, he was amazed by Reb Noson's purity and holiness. He exclaimed, "I thought that Reb Noson was only a student of Rebbe Nachman, but now I see that he is really a rebbe in his own right! And I should know, because I set aside all of the tzaddikim of my time and attached myself to a young boy before he was even married. I know a tzaddik when I see one!"

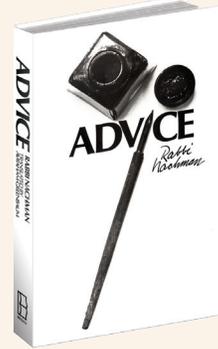
Based on Or HaOrot I, pp. 127-128, 136-137

SIDEPATH

Advice (Likutey Etzot) translated by Avraham Greenbaum

PERCEPTIONS OF GODLINESS. 6. Torah and mitzvot are the path to apprehension of God. For every letter of the Torah and every detail of every mitzvah is a "contraction" (*Likutey Moharan I*, 30:3).

7. Wisdom and understanding are the foundation of any perception of God. But the only way to acquire them is if one "hates covetousness" (Exodus 18:21). One must hate materialism absolutely. Someone who is attracted by it will inevitably fall from the necessary level of wisdom and understanding into folly, stupidity, anxiety and depression. He will be captured in the net of the "husks" and the forces of the Other Side, which are the opposite of wisdom and understanding (*Likutey Moharan I*, 30:4).



8. The joy we experience on the three annual festivals can arouse new perceptions of Godliness (*ibid.* I, 30:5).

9. Every single Jew is a part of God above. The essence of Godliness is to be found in the heart. The Godliness in the heart of the Jew is infinite. There is no end to the light of the flame that burns there. ... But this same burning passion would make it impossible for him to accomplish anything at all in his service of God, nor would he be able to reveal any good trait, if he did not hold his passion within certain limits. He must "contract" it, so to speak, in order to be able to serve God in a measured, orderly way (*ibid.* I, 49:1).



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.