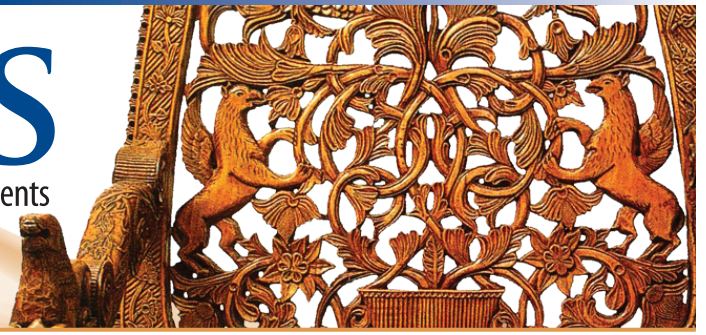


PATHWAYS

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and His Students

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Follow the Tzaddik

By Yossi Katz

MY LITTLE KIDS often ask me if Noah was Jewish. I find this to be an interesting question because we tend not to associate Noah with the founding of the Jewish nation as we do Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But wasn't Noah a great Tzaddik in whose merit the world was saved from complete destruction?

"Noah was completely righteous in his generation" (Genesis 6:9). Rashi explains that some interpret this verse as great praise for Noah, who lived in a corrupt generation. But others say that the word *be'dorotav* (in his generation) implies that had Noah lived in a more righteous generation, such as the generation of Abraham, he would not have been considered anything special.

Yet how can we say this about someone whom the Torah calls a "complete tzaddik," someone whom the Torah testifies spent 120 years of his life building what seemed to be an odd mega-ship exactly the way he was commanded, while the rest of the world looked on and laughed?

Reb Noson explains that Noah was no Moses. When God threatened to wipe out the Jews after the sin of building the Golden Calf, Moses pleaded on their behalf, "If so, then wipe me out as well." Moses understood that God possesses much "hidden kindness" and that even if mankind is far from holiness, it was his job to reveal the extent of God's kindness and compassion, for "God created a world of kindness." Had Noah had this depth of understanding, he also could have saved the world.

There is a rule that once God grants permission for destruction, everyone is in danger. Noah was no exception, and he himself had to flee and hide. The Tzaddik represents kindness, but if he does not reveal this kindness, it remains hidden. Thus, Noah had to be secluded and locked up in the ark.

For 120 years Noah was building the ark, the purpose of which was to create curiosity and interest and raise awareness to the urgent need of repentance. Yet only Noah and his family were able to be saved. He didn't succeed in bringing along even one extra person. He wasn't able to lower himself from his very lofty, righteous level to find merit in the wicked, pray for them, and wake them up by uncovering their good points. A true Tzaddik, in contrast, has the ability to reach out to those who are most distant from God and work to bring them back.

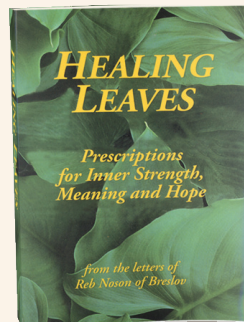
Today we live in a world that is looking more and more like the generation of the Flood. How can we save ourselves from both spiritual and physical destruction? By realizing that God will never leave us without a true Tzaddik to guide us and do kindness for us. Now as always, we rely on Rebbe Nachman to reveal God's true essence and show each of us how to connect to Him in the most meaningful and personal way.

Based on Likutey Halakhot, Milah 3; ibid. Shabbat 7

HEALING LEAVES

FROM THE LETTERS OF REB NOSON OF BRESLOV

Compiled by Yitzchok Leib Bell



Even when the gates are closed and locked on every side and in every corner – so that one might mistakenly think that there is no hope, God forbid – I still believe that there remains plenty of hope! For God's capacity to send relief and deliverance is very great indeed, and His power of salvation is inexhaustible! (Letter #314)

Starting Young

By Reb Noson

Thousands of people traveled to hear and speak to Rebbe Nachman during his lifetime. Reb Noson, the Rebbe's closest disciple, also made mention of the children who saw the Rebbe and came away enriched.

A nine-year-old boy who was ill with a slight fever was sent by his father to the Rebbe. The Rebbe spoke with the boy at length and gave him wonderful guidance. This boy was a very fearful child. The Rebbe said to him, "Why are you afraid *now*? Think how afraid you'll be when they take you out to the cemetery and leave you there alone. Today you are afraid to go out alone at night. What will you do then?"

He also told him, "Who in the world wants to burn himself with his own hands? When you sin, it is as if you burn yourself with your very own hands, because eventually you will receive the hard and bitter punishment for sinning. Surely you care enough about yourself not to burn yourself with your own hands."

The Rebbe then gave the boy a *segulah* for his fever: it was to take dust which had been trodden into the threshold and put it in a vessel on the fire until it became bleached and heated through and through. The dust was to be put on his side, and then he would be healed.

The boy grew up, and these and other words that the Rebbe had spoken to him remained inscribed on his heart. He remembers them to this day. From this we see the way the Rebbe would look at even a young child and seek to imbue him with the fear of Heaven so he should begin to learn how to serve God. Thus it is written, "Train a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

I have also heard from many other people who were children in the time of the Rebbe about amazing and beautiful things they heard from him in their childhood. They still remember them, and looking back, they now realize how the Rebbe was able to convey to them certain things which would benefit them later on.

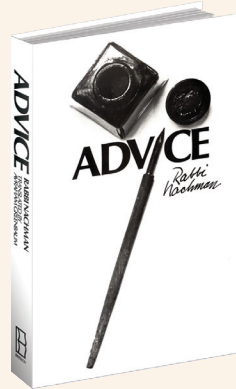
From Tzaddik #490

SIDEPATH

Advice (Likutey Etzot) translated by Avraham Greenbaum

PERCEPTIONS OF GODLINESS. 10. The more one draws close to God, the more he must understand how far he is from Him. When a person believes he has already succeeded in achieving closeness to God and attaining an understanding of Him, it is a sign that he does not know anything. If he did, he would know that he is very far from God and that he knows absolutely nothing. It is impossible to explain this satisfactorily in words. The greatness of God has no limits (*Likutey Moharan I*, 63).

11. You must keep your eyes firmly shut as far as this world is concerned – even if you have to hold them closed with your finger! Pay no attention whatsoever to this world. Then nothing in the world will cause you any pain or suffering. But you should understand that it is impossible to remain in this state of self-nullification all the time and still be a human being. Inevitably, self-nullification can be achieved only at certain moments in the mode of "running and returning" (Ezekiel 1:14). In the period of "returning," a trace of the state of self-nullification remains and shines with the sweet and pleasant light of Godliness. It is impossible to describe this experience to anybody else. It brings a tremendous joy, which can lead us to new horizons in understanding Torah (*Likutey Moharan I*, 65:3, 4).



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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.