

Monthly Rays

Chodesh Elul
Breslov
Inspiration



Dear Readers,

Elul... That tingling time of apprehension and tension. *'What'll happen to me? Is there any hope after I've done what I did?'* Or, in other frames of mind, we delude ourselves with the smug self-assurance, *'I'm fine. I mean good and do my best; how much higher can I get already?'*

The Rebbe's way of teshuvah is in neither of the two. With his refreshing approach he leaves no space for getting overwhelmed and despairing, yet he also gives no leeway for sitting back with folded arms. The secret of Elul, he tells us in Likutei Moharan 6, lies in knowing both strategies: בְּקִי בְּרָצוֹא and בְּקִי בְּשׁוֹב, knowing how to run and how to turn back.

When we're on a high, floating on a cloud of closeness to Hashem, we need to remember that this isn't it – there are even higher levels that we need to reach. And when we sink to the pits of peccadillo, drowning in

self-hate and beating ourselves up, that's when we need to keep in mind that Hashem is here too. Even in this purgatory, we can come close to Him.

It takes great tenacity to toil in avodas Hashem and keep trying to reach an even higher madreiga, yet still not fall from even the greatest failure, but we have the Rebbe who keeps infusing us with the knowledge that Hashem is everywhere and always at our side. And come Rosh Hashana, when he takes care of all of us who send our husbands to him, we surely don't have what to worry about, with the best defender on our case.

May we all be zoiche to a wonderful year full of the knowledge that Hashem is right next to us, lovingly watching and guiding us.

בתיבה וחתימה טובה

Faigy Kahane

Please send in your comments to raysof148@gmail.com



A Loving Letter

עלים לתרופה רפח

*Baruch Hashem, Sunday, Rosh Chodesh Elul 5599,
Breslov.*

Peace to my beloved son, Reb Yitzchak.

I received your letter now, and I haven't yet finished davening because I was slightly weak as I usually am after Shabbos, and I delayed with my tefilla. For now, you should know that I already received a new travel permit baruch Hashem, and I plan to travel im yirtzeh Hashem tomorrow after midday, and I have made up my mind not to delay any further. Hashem should help me with His kindness to travel to the place that I will travel, and to prostrate in the place that I will prostrate, which I truly don't know at all until where the matter reaches, but I know clearly with Hashem's help that I must travel there at all times, and especially for the exceedingly holy, awesome and fearful Rosh Hashana, and that I also need to awaken and encourage you all with all my strength, with all kinds of true words in the world, that you should also merit being there, because it is your very life! And even if you already know a little of this, but you need to start now from fresh, especially for Rosh Hashana which is the essence of new starts for the better. There is very much to talk about this, but there isn't enough time nor paper.

I also received the letter from Reb Mordechai with the money, and it was all before I davened mussaf of Rosh Chodesh Elul. I read it well, and it informed

me that the calf is lost, and we need rachamim that the cow should give milk. May it be His will that it should be so. All our tzaros and bitterness come from the sin of the eigel, and we need the פרה to be mechaper for its child, like Rashi explains, and everything is in order to merit that the blood should turn to milk.

Until now, you've done business trading in leeches, and if you merited to do business as you should, the leeches ought to have taken the bad blood out of you, until it'll turn into pure blood which is pure (honestly gotten) money, Yiddishe money. For the word 'דמים' has two meanings: blood and money. And turbulent damim which is hard to purify brings the illness of measles rachmana litzlon, and all kinds of diseases rachmana litzlon, and all the problems of parnassah and all the machlokes, bizonos, and bloodshed which you are davening about now. You need a big yeshua that your son should return to complete health very soon. The Baal Harachamim, the Creator of cures should fulfil your wishes very soon, and Reb Mordechai also asks to be saved for the future, and everyone needs Hashem's salvation, may Hashem fulfil all the wishes of the Yidden for the good.

All this is the secret of the kavanos of Elul, which is to subdue the blood of the left heart chamber, and the tikun is through turning דם-blood into דם-be silent, to bear the shame and bloodshed from all sides. The fact that each person holds himself in low esteem and it seems to everyone as if chas veshalom there is no hope, is also an aspect of bloodshed. And we need to bear everything, whatever happens to me. And if chas veshalom I won't have olam haba, nevertheless the truth remains the truth, and I want and yearn only for the true truth, because eventually, my day of recollection will arrive, and it is unavoidable that I will lie on the ground, and the earthenware will be put across my eyes, and my body will wither in the grave and turn into dust, worms and maggots. And even if it's a mockery and shame to talk about it now, especially like there have presently increased wise chassidim who know the wisdom of drinking with wondrous chochmos, as it is written, 'Woe to those who are gibborim for drinking wine...' But baruch Hashem, Who did wondrous chessed with me that I know the secret of all these chochmos. They

are false and deceitful, fleeting vanity and so on. Eventually, one has to give an accounting and cheshbon and so on, but nevertheless, chalilah to become discouraged from this. This is the whole kavana of Elul, which is the aspect of בוקי ברצוא, בוקי בשוב, knowing how to run and how to return. If I will rise to the heavens You are there, and if I lower to the pits, there You are too...

How very much I have spoken about it, and how very much it is necessary to fortify oneself with it! Reb Mordechai wrote to me that it still seems to him that there is no hope chas veshalom. If so, you've left no life for anyone else! You should know and believe me that there are many who are worse than you, and they too need to enliven themselves with the kavanos of Elul as above, and to truly fulfil at all times: 'and if I lower to the pits, there You are,' and then it will be good for them eternally. And the whole main commotion and great opposition that there is against us is due to this that our great Rebbe wants to revive people who are dead and who are literally like corpses, who have gotten so discouraged due to their many deep aveiros that they are like actual dead people. I too in my pain know a little of this, and how very much more so does the Rebbe himself. The whole big commotion that there is upon us is only because of this, because the Rebbe with his great koach engages in their tikkun and their hatzala, and mainly through this aspect that he wants to shine into them that 'the whole world is full of His glory – Rise up and sing, you who dwell in the dust!' And they rebel against accepting his favor. But what do we have to do with this? Everyone should go in his way, and we with His wondrous kindness will fulfil 'I grabbed hold of him and I won't let go...'

The messenger is very pressured and I must cut short because there is much to do. You should know that nevertheless, we constantly need to encourage ourselves with happiness, and this is the main hischazkus, because חדות ה' היא מעוזכם - being happy with Hashem is your strength.

The words of your father, friend and teacher, who wants the eternal tikkun of your souls, amen so it should be.

Nosson of Breslov.



A Touching Tefila

ליקוטי תפילות ו

Help me, Hashem, to always be strong, bold and forceful in Your avoda. Don't ever let me fall chas veshalom. Don't cast me away from You, and Your holy ruach don't take from me. Let me merit to know how to run and how to turn back, בקי ברצוא and בקי בשוב. I should be able to find You in every place, whether during an aliyah or a yeridah, as it says, 'If I will rise to the heavens, You are there, and if I descend to the pits, there You are.' And I should merit holding onto You and cleaving to You constantly, and it should be fulfilled in me אני לדודי ודודי לי - I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me.

Please Hashem, Your mercy and compassion should reach me, and my memory should rise and come before You for the good. Have mercy on me with Your abundant rachmanus, and don't leave or forsake me to remain chas veshalom in these lowly places that I have arrived at until now. Don't leave me Hashem, don't distance Yourself from me. Don't let the depths swallow me up or the pit close its mouth over me. Be gracious and lift me up, elevate me from the earth, and from the depths of my lowliness raise me up. Fulfil in me what is written, 'I will descend with you to Mitzrayim, and I will surely ascend with you.' And the yeridah should be the ultimate aliyah. Have mercy on me, and send me Your salvation. Carry me

in Your right hand of justice, and support me with Your deep compassion. Be with me always, and give me the strength and seichel to hold onto You constantly, and don't ever let me fall chas veshalom. Fulfil what is written 'If he begins to fall, he is not abandoned, for Hashem supports his hand.' Hasten and speeden to redeem us with a geula of the souls, and take me out and raise me up from today and now on, from all kinds of descents, yeridos and hisrachkos from You that I became distanced until now... Have mercy on a poor and poverty-stricken man such as I. Be gracious to me and make me stand up...

ליקוטי מוהר"ן ו

The secret of Chodesh Elul is being proficient in two separate skills.

One is called בְּקִי בְּרִצּוֹא, and the other is called בְּקִי בְּשׁוֹב.

In laymen's terms, this means that whoever wants to do teshuva needs to gather all his guts to always strengthen himself in Hashem's ways - no matter what, no matter when, no matter whether you're on a spiritual high or you're an unfeeling stone. Even if you think you've already reached the limits of greatness and pretty soon you'll be bumping into the heaven, you still need to aim even higher. You can't just stay on your present madreiga blissfully, enjoying the view from above, but you need to strive higher to reach even more.

And so too the opposite. Even if you've already stumbled to the lowest levels and unearthed the bottommost pit in the world, you are still not allowed to give in to despair. You just have to dig even deeper and scrabble with your fingertips desperately to discover that Hashem is there too. No matter how dirty it is there, you still need to search through the blackness, because Hashem is everywhere, and you can connect to Him even in the worst places. **And the only path to teshuvah is by being proficient in both of these skills.**

The Rebbe was very detailed with this, because it needs great proficiency to toil and exert yourself in avodas Hashem, and keep hoping and anticipating to reach an even greater madreiga, yet still not fall from anything, even if chas veshalom it will be like it will be.



The Clear Path

C.R. Zwolinski

In Likutey Moharan II, 82, Rebbe Nachman tells us to follow the path that Moshe Rabbeinu already paved for us, the path of teshuvah and forgiveness. Yet even the most faithful person can sometimes feel this is a lonely path, especially because we are not in the midst of Uman Rosh Hashana. The goal seems so far away.

We feel a dissonance between our deepest thoughts and what we know to be true and how this truth can be quickly forgotten. It seems that our thoughts take a wrong turn now and again and as a result, we aren't proud of the feelings or actions that follow.

We have moments of purity and

light where we yearn to come closer to Hashem, but it seems we have other moments where that yearning is swallowed up by mundane concerns—we have a lot of things to get done at work and home. We don't feel as connected to Hashem as we wish to.

We want to repair our past mistakes and we know Elul and the Yamim Tovim are the primary times to do so, but sometimes this seems to be an impossible task. We doubt we can really pull this off. It requires so much energy, so much focus. How can we accomplish this on our own?

Baruch Hashem, we don't have to do this on our own.

In Likutey Tefillos II (Volume 7, The Fiftieth Gate, BRI) Reb Noson's prayer 41 reminds us that Hashem and the Tzaddik emes are there for us. In this prayer we beseech Hashem, in His great mercy, to help us walk the path of teshuvah that Moshe Rabbeinu and the true Tzaddikim have already cleared for us.

On the first of Elul, Moshe Rabbeinu climbed the mountain for the third time and entered into profound hisbodedus, pleading with Hashem to forgive the Jewish people for the cheit ha'eigel. Finally, after 40 days of prayer and learning, on Yom Kippur, Hashem's forgiveness was announced. This is the path Moshe forged—the clear path, the path of teshuva and forgiveness.

The Tzaddik emes forged a path for us, too. When we bind ourselves to the Rebbe, he gives us a map (his Torah) and guiderails (Reb Noson's explanations) so we never have to lose sight of the path. We're not walking alone, there's room for the Tzaddikim.

We ask Hashem to help us connect our thoughts to Him, so we will truly be able to serve Him. We ask Hashem to guard us and rescue us from arrogance and crooked thoughts. We took the first step towards being

helped, which is admitting we need help, we can't do it alone. Just the verbalization, the asking itself, can bring new confidence.

We know that when we're worried or confused, talking to a good friend can lift our spirits and help set us going in the right direction. Everyone needs a good friend. Rebbe Nachman teaches us to talk to Hashem as if He's our very best friend, because *He's our very best friend*. And of course, the more familiar we are with the Rebbe's teachings, the more we understand how much the Tzaddik himself has done for us, befriended us. We feel it every time we conquer a negative thought.

The path of teshuvah and forgiveness is no longer lonely, no longer quite as challenging. We can now look forward to walking the holy path of true teshuvah that "*Moshe Rabbeinu and the true Tzaddikim drew into the world with their awesome, wondrous ways.*"*

*The Fiftieth Gate, Volume 7, pages 346-349; The Breslov Research Institute



WHY to send your husband to Uman, and HOW to send him.

By Aviva Gross

Shaul Hamelech is about to confront one of his first battles against the Pelishtim as king of the nation. Thirty thousand armed chariots and an army of a hundred thousand skilled soldiers are marching in his direction. Tension is at its highest level, with the chances of winning miserably low. The nation is petrified; thousands of soldiers have already escaped the battlefield in panic before anything has even begun, finding hiding places in hidden cliffs, behind huge rocks, and in deep tunnels.

Shaul Hamelech is ready to announce the beginning of the war, but he cannot. He was told by Shmuel Hanavi to wait seven days for his arrival and only then begin. It is the morning of the seventh day. The enemy army is close, very close. The sounds of their marching are already discernable. Shaul's soldiers are slowly deserting him, leaving by the hundreds. He can no longer wait. He can't afford to lose them all! Afraid for his kingdom, he makes the decision to wait no longer and go out to battle.

When he makes his first battle move, Shmuel Hanavi shows up. Frightened at what he sees, Shmuel asks Shaul in horror, "What have you done? How did you risk going to war yourself when I warned you in Hashem's Name to wait?"

Shaul excuses himself that he was scared that he would soon stay without anyone... but Shmuel doesn't accept his justifications. "You have behaved foolishly! And therefore, Hashem will take the kingdom away from you and it won't have any continuity."

Dovid Hamelech was given a similar trial. He saw the enemy army coming closer and closer, they were almost within reach. But he did not start the war. He was waiting for the designated sign from Hashem of branches shaking in the trees. He stood to lose everything; his nation, his army and his life. But he was ready and prepared for that, he would not go against Hashem's command.

At the last second, the sign was heard and the battle began. The war ended in a resounding victory on his side, and the kingdom was granted to him eternally as king of Hashem's nation.

* * *

We all want life. We want pleasure, we want success. How do we achieve

it? What can I do that it should STAY with me?

Alexander the Great asked this same question to the smartest people in the world in his generation: the Yiddishe Chachamim. He asked, מה יעשה אדם ויחי - What should a person do so he should live – a productive, pleasurable, successful life worth living?

The chachamim answered him, ימית את עצמו - He should kill himself. Why kill himself? That's the exact opposite of life - he'll be dead!?

But that's the secret to life. You want something, you need to first give it up. If you want happiness, be ready to accept suffering. If you're ready to suffer a little pain, you won't need to suffer long term intense pain and suffering. The Rebbe says, ליידי אביסל - Suffer a little then you won't need to suffer a lot.

But if you're not ready for that, you want a happy, pleasurable, successful life right now without any suffering in the beginning, you only want to indulge in pleasure, comfort and ability, then you're out for great pain and suffering.

If Shaul Hamelech would have given up his kingdom for that moment in his mind, if he would have relinquished

his army to listen to Hashem, then it would have been his forever. If Chava would have been ready to deprive herself of the serpent's promise of eternal life and equality to Hashem, she would have gained it later on in a strong, deep, eternal way.

Those are big examples. Let's see how that applies to us:

We are all preparing ourselves for the day of buying life. A year of true living. A year of all our problems being solved and settled, with no new ones arising. *That close family member should finally have shalom bayis, Malka'le should feel enjoyment in davening and stop putting her sisters down, Miri should stop devoting so much energy to externals, Chezky who's slipping should return to the right path, and that long-awaited shidduch should happen already. Chaim should get along with his friends and Rebbeim and be allowed back into yeshivah, Devorah should become emotionally stable, Freidy's sickness should find the right doctor and cure, and we should finally celebrate the day of being debt-free.*

As the chachamim answered Alexander, if we want life, we want a pleasurable healthy wealthy year, we have to be ready to suffer. We have to give up our tranquil routine, our peace of mind, our partner-in-life for

a week, and send him to Uman.

But what will I eat? Should I have someone move in to me, or should I move in with the children to someone else? Neh! Shlep all the children without my husband's help and discipline?! I can't go to my mother. My sister-in-law's pity is unbearable, I'm not ready to be a nebech-case. How will I manage with hyperactive Yanky? I'll have to fight with hands and feet? He's so wild and chutzpa'dig when Tatty's not around. Even the rest of the kids know that their weak mother is like putty in their hands; they can get away with whatever they want. Who will look after my boys in Shul? They'll be completely hefker! And what should I answer all my neighbors who roll their eyes at me and mutter, "Crazy! Yom Tov is a time for the husband to be home!"

It's hard. But being ready to accept this hardship and suffering of one week for which we'll gain the biggest and greatest gift of a forgiven year is worth it. A year that you can be sure that you are doing your tikkun completely, a year worth singing and dancing the whole time – ראוי לו - לשמוח כל השנה - Things will really fall into place.

Why? How?

I deserve so much bad and

punishment for my aveiros! Maybe it's good for me to suffer a little, maybe the pain will build me and bring me higher? Who says all my sins will really be forgiven? Can the Rebbe really arrange a good year for someone like me?

When Hashem created the world, the malachim were mad. They asked Hashem, "Why did you create man? You know he's going to sin and bring so much destruction!" Even if a person will spend his entire life doing teshuvah for just one aveira, it will still not be enough!

Then the neshama of Mashiach came before Hashem and took upon himself to correct all man's wrongdoing. He will take responsibility for them! And so, when Adam Harishon sinned with the eitz hadaas, the neshamos of all the generations were with him and sinned along with him, but the neshama of Mashiach escaped.

Ever since then, Mashiach came down on this world five times to do his job, to bring Yidden back to Hashem, to correct their wrongdoings and negotiate a complete forgiveness: first in the form of Moshe Rabbeinu, then in Reb Shimon Bar Yochai, then again in the Ari Hakadosh, the Baal Shem Tov, and for the last time in the Rebbe, Reb Nachman.

There is no way in a million years

for it to be at all possible that we, according to how we stand and how many aveiros we've done, should be able to פועל אויס a year of complete forgiveness and receive a peaceful year with all good, in which they'll be reason to sing and dance all year long. It is impossible; as holy and erlich as we might be, as hard as we might work, as much as we'll fast, do teshuva and inflict suffering upon ourselves, we can still not restore what we've damaged. So here comes the neshama of Moshe-Mashiach. He takes over our messy file and wipes a clean slate.

But he needs our help. How can I give him the power to do so?

A. *The more I connect to him in my mind and soul, the more I trust him and believe in his power, the more it gives him the power to help me.*

Reb Nosson says, כָּל מִי שֶׁסֹּמֵךְ יוֹתֵר עַל בְּחַיֵּי הַצַּדִּיק שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ בְּחַיֵּי אֱמֶת, כָּפִי סְמִיכָתוֹ בְּאֱמֶת, בְּן הַצַּדִּיק סוֹמֵךְ אוֹתוֹ בְּיוֹתֵר. Everyone who relies more on the power of the Tzaddik that he has a true power, according to his reliance, that's how much the Tzaddik supports him even more. It works percentage wise. The more you believe that he has unlimited powers, the more he is granted the ability to rescue you. It doesn't make sense logically. There are no mathematic formulae

and equations that work here. It needs emunah peshuta! Without understanding why or how, believe and trust in him!

But I know my crookedness, utter lack of strength and incompetence well enough. I am so far from complete forgiveness... It doesn't matter! It doesn't go according to what you did, but according to how you rely, believe and trust in the tzaddik!

B. By enabling my husband to be fully there with Yishuv hadaas, I give the tzaddik more power to help me.

My husband can 'be there in Uman' 10%, and he can 'be there' 100%. I as his aishes chayil need to give him the ability to be there 100%. How?

He is the soldier on the battlefield, the one who will give himself over to the tzaddik to take over our family's file, do teshuvah and negotiate with Hashem for a special year of forgiveness for us, so we need to aid him. But before that, we need to clarify that by helping lighten the burden of being there, you are not just being an אשה כשרה who understands her husband's needs to have a good time with entertainment and trips, and enables him to vent a little with friends, gets some wind in his cheeks and return fresh and relaxed to face his stressful life as a husband, father, breadwinner mechanech etc. Totally not!

According to his Yishuv hadaas, teshuva and connection to the tzaddik, that's how much you'll gain for yourself personally. The Rebbe will be able to take over your case better and deeper. The Rebbe will make him into a מענטש, and besides for just straightening his head, he'll give him the wisdom to guide you and your children through all emotional suffering, to survive mentally and physically in this crazy world in the coming year and forever.

How can we assist him? For some, it's cooking his heimishe food. For others, it's packing his belongings, or staying home with hyperactive Yanky and NOT sending him along only to be off my head, so that my husband can daven better. For everyone, it is something else uniquely.

For some, it might even be taking care of his dear wife and ensuring that she is happily settled and comfortable as if on vacation. How can he calmly daven and throw himself into teshuva if he knows he left his most beloved thing in the world - his wife - at home in agony?

Arrange good food and company for his wife, make sure she stays away from any negative or depressing influences and surroundings as much as possible, because it's crucial for the success of the mission. Prepare before disaster strikes. Look after the

kids so that she doesn't go crazy with the double burden of watching wild children who know that Tatty's not home and we can do what we want... Don't be mean to her! Don't assume that she'll just manage and everything will work out – these things need to be planned in advance!

If the hero of the battle – your husband (*disappointed? Thought you'll read 'the wife':?)*) knows that his wife is happy at home and taken care of, he'll be able to truly fulfil being by the Rebbe for Rosh Hashana in the full sense of the word.

C. Support and Teamwork.

It's not that you're doing him a favor, letting him go, and now he needs to pay for it with a long list of compensation. 'He's leaving me alone so I need to show him how much I'm suffering and how hard it is for me. What a big nebech I am,' painted in vivid colors along with pitiful tears. This weakens every soldier sent out to battle – a wife that is not supportive or proud of him.

Be strong! Show him how thrilled you are that you have him there. You're proud, happy, and thrilled to stay home alone with the kids on Yom Tov because you know what he's doing there for you and the children. Support is the most important thing he needs in order to be there calmly

and fully - verbal support, with matching deeds.

It is hard to actually do this, but if you're ready to 'kill yourself' at this crucial time of investment for the entire year, you stand to benefit a year of long-term true life worth living.

Reizel had sent her husband to Uman for seven years already, always accompanied by tears and tantrums. It wasn't that she didn't want him to go, she just needed to show him what a great sacrifice she's making. From the moment he left the house to the airport until he was safely back home, she would spend hours crying on the phone to him about all the sad things that were happening to her. Even on Rosh Hashana itself, when these phone conversations weren't available, his heart was in his hands, thinking, "What's happening to her? I'll need to call immediately on Motzei Yom Tov to find out how she's managing." All his tefillos would revolve around begging Hashem that she should manage to survive Yom Tov.

One year, they moved to an area in which Breslov was much more alive. She saw the happiness with which everyone was preparing their husbands for the big event.

The atmosphere drew her in and she too became infected with the happiness, until she realized what a treat it was that her husband is traveling rather than a punishment. One of her neighbors was crying to her that her husband can't travel this year, and she was so worried what's going to be.

That was the end of all the moaning and groaning. She sent her husband off like a king! And he couldn't stop marveling over what a different Rosh Hashana he had with so much Yishuv hadaas, and he could do teshuvah and daven so calmly and relaxed. Instead of being a nightmare, it was a real Yom Tov! But the real reward was the year that was in store for them. They were zoiche to so many yeshuos, and they had an extra peaceful, delightful year.

But what if I can't send my husband off that way?

It's okay. Even if you send your husband and he's only there 10%, it's still much greater and more productive than performing the best avodos all year long. As we see from the Rebbe, before he got the gift of Rosh Hashana, he would prescribe certain difficult fasts and סיגופים for people to take upon

themselves in order to cleanse their souls from all wrongdoings and fulfil their unique individual tafkid completely, which is every Yid's dream.

But after he received the gift of Rosh Hashana, he said that whoever was by him for Rosh Hashana, that is enough for him to reach his tikkun. He doesn't need any more pain and suffering or any other kind of עבודות. But whoever wasn't by him for Rosh Hashana, even if he'll perform these difficult avodos and tikkunim all year long, it still won't help him.

So let's roll up our sleeves and get ready to prepare ourselves through:

A) *Deeply and truly believing in the tzaddik's kochos to rescue us completely.*

B) *Giving our husbands the Yishuv hadaas to really be there on the highest level.*

C) *Providing that soldier with support, and showing him that his family is overjoyed with his role in the battle.*

May we all have a happy Yom Tov and a wonderful year!



To Send, or not to Send

*A True Story**

The doctor took one look into my wide-open mouth and gasped. "I've never seen such a swollen throat in my life!" he exclaimed in horror, and ran out of the examination room to call a senior doctor to have a look. Red lights were blinking in my head warningly. I had thought it was just a regular strep culture, but the doctor's reaction made it seem to be something else, and I twisted my hands nervously as I waited for the second opinion to be stated.

The older doctor's face was very serious, and his expression made me expect the worst. Ominously, he enumerated a long list of complicated names and conditions which I might be suffering from, not refraining from adding the horrifying C. Callously ignoring my shock, he first prescribed strong antibiotics and cortisone, and

told me to call him within a few days if the symptoms worsened.

My instantaneous reaction was 'But my husband's ticket to Uman for Rosh Hashana is in three days!' yet I had no strength or headspace to even think about the subject. Burying my head in the sand like an oyster, I hoped that the strong medication would take effect and I would be fine by then. I certainly couldn't imagine suffering like this another day, not to mention three!

Taking the medication was a story of its own. Pushing something down a closed space is impossible, any child can tell you that. Well, pushing something down my virtually closed throat was impossible too. I shoved my finger in to convince myself that it was only my mind deluding me and I should stop being stupid and just swallow

the pills, but my finger unfortunately didn't reveal any available gap. With the strong warnings ringing in my mind not to take the medication and painkillers on an empty stomach, my fate was sealed. Eat I must.

Every bite and sip left me hitting the roof in pain. With every ounce of self-control, I forced myself to swallow, but to no avail. After all that intense effort, most of the food or water would just shoot out of my nose.

Day one and two passed with no sign of any improvement. I became so weak that my eyes closed of their own accord when I merely sat down. Could I send my husband to Uman in such a state? Was I even allowed to? Who would take care of me and our four kids? The question was hanging in the air but none of us dared to actually bring it up. I hoped that the medication would start taking effect on the third day as the doctor had promised, and I would be saved from making the fateful decision since I would be on the mend.

Meanwhile, I was in agony. I couldn't really eat, I could hardly drink, I couldn't talk normally. My attempts at conducting an important phone call with my sister-in-law ended in a disaster. I croaked to the best of my ability, and after countless tries, she finally understood what I was trying to say. But immediately after I put

the phone down, my husband got a call from his hysterical sister. *"What is wrong with her? At first, I didn't know who was calling and was about to slam the phone down on this meshuggener, until I realized who it was... She sounded retarded, has she gone crazy?"*

Day three arrived. With no recourse, I made my conclusion. If anyone could help me, it was only the Rebbe. If it was indeed something dangerous like the doctor had scared me into thinking, then I HAD to send my husband to Uman! I needed the Rebbe to rescue me! And if it's nothing and it's just a matter of time until the medication starts working, and on Rosh Hashana I'll be fine, then why keep him home?

With a thumping heart, quaking knees and a prayer on his lips, my husband packed his suitcase and tenderly made his tearful farewell.

That night, my condition worsened so much that I couldn't sleep. After piling up a stack of ten pillows and trying to rest in a reclining position, I realized it was futile. I felt completely lost. Panicking, I wanted to yell, scream and cry hysterically that I've sent my husband to Uman with mesirus nefesh and this is what I'm getting in return?! But I forced myself to relax and somehow, miraculously, I dozed off. First thing in the morning, I made an emergency appointment at the doctor, and he notified me that indeed, the

antibiotics hadn't worked.

At a loss, he decided to try a new, stronger medical approach.

My husband chose that moment to call from the airport in Kiev. With my last bit of strength, I tried to extricate the words from my clogged-up throat to tell him the latest update, but it took many failed attempts until he finally managed to gather that the doctor had determined that the antibiotics hadn't worked at all. He was terribly shattered. "I'm going to the tzion and I'll tell the Rebbe what's going on," he reassured me. He later told me that he never had such a broken heart by the tzion before.

The situation only went worse. I had to fight tooth and nail not to give in to the depression that was rushing at me in huge rolling waves and threatening to engulf me. I read a lot of the Rebbe's teachings and tried to give myself chizuk, but I was on the verge of collapse. However, it seems like the Rebbe was stronger than me, and somehow, I pushed through the day while staying strong, and reached the evening.

But sleep eluded me. The painkillers I took every four hours didn't help me to swallow my own saliva. Lying flat wasn't an option at all, and sitting up wasn't enough too. The pain made me jump up in with every swallow, and I absolutely couldn't

sleep.

I couldn't take it anymore. I wanted to throw a tantrum then and there; jump out of bed and let the river of tears flow in complaint to Hashem. But some small voice told me to stay put. Davening in depression is not beneficial. So I listened to that voice and remained in bed surrounded by my pillows, trying to relax. Several painful hours later, when I had calmed down somewhat, I got out of bed and did a little hisbodedus, excluding the hysterics. That relaxed me and I went back to bed. Using force, I pushed all thoughts related to my illness far away, and concentrated on different things. I thought about the menu for Rosh Hashana, what I still need to prepare, and I trusted the Rebbe that he'd take care of me and everything would be fine. My throat is not my department, and I don't have to think about it anymore. With this running through my head, I finally fell into blessed slumber.

7:00am, my toddler ran into my room with something crucially important to tell me. He jolted me awake, and in my half-asleep state I realized that something was different. My throat felt different. It was as if a new entranceway was planted there. Cautiously, I tried talking, and was astounded when my voice was heard clearly. "*Nachman!* (My

toddler's name) Nachman!" I said it again and again, not believing that I could really talk! In a regular voice! I repeated his name over and over, astounded that words actually came out of my throat, and it didn't hurt! He enjoyed the attention, that's for sure, giggling in delight and totally oblivious to the miracle which had just occurred. It felt as if someone had stuck their hands into my throat and literally opened up a new passageway. It was still swollen, and I was still very weak, but there was space for food to go down. I could eat, I could talk! It hurt, but it was possible! I grabbed the phone and called my husband. He was shocked to hear me talking in an almost regular voice (if you could call those whoops of joy regular...) and joined in the simcha wholeheartedly. "What a nesh, what a nesh," he repeated over and over again.

My throat didn't heal at once. It took another two weeks for the pain to go away completely, for my throat to get back in shape, and for me to regain my strength, but slowly, I recovered. Baruch Hashem, there was no need for any stronger antibiotics or different medications and steroids. I was healed! As the Rebbe says, סמחו על כחי הגדול!

If you have any true story on any topic that can be mechazek other Breslover women, please send it in to raysof148@gmail.com

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A Taste of the Rebbe's Treasures

The Rebbe says that after you've thrown all your movements onto Hashem, there's no need to worry about what you do, so does that mean there's no need for any cheshbon hanefesh?

A person must review his actions daily to see how he behaved, and to regret his bad deeds.

The Rebbe says in Sichos Haran 47: "A person needs a big zchus to merit composing oneself every day for an hour, and to have charata for everything that needs regret. Because not every person merits Yishuv hadaas any hour of the day, because the day rushes past and he has no time to compose himself even once in his whole life! Therefore, we must strengthen ourselves to see to designate time to compose ourselves properly about all the deeds we do in this world, if it is worthy that we should spend our days with such actions."

In Chayei Moharan 587, it says, "One of the young boys used to sleep in the Rebbe's room. He once approached the Rebbe and started crying to him that he wants to be an erliche Yid. The Rebbe taught him the path to it, and he told him which limudim to learn, and he also commanded him to be a baal cheshbon.

That means that every night before he lays down on his bed, he should think about how his day passed. If he learnt and davened properly on that day, he should thank Hashem and give praise to His holy great Name that He gave him the merit of learning and davening a little on the past day, according to His will. And he should beg Hashem that He should help him on the coming day to increase his serving Hashem with even more Torah and tefilla, and with more kavana.

And if chas veshalom, he didn't learn and daven properly that day, he should confess and beg Hashem, saying: 'Ribbono Shel Olam, I know that I sinned on this day and I didn't serve You properly, not with Torah and not with tefilla and so on. Now I beg You to forgive me for the past in which I didn't serve You properly, and help me tomorrow to serve You with Torah and tefilla with complete kavana, according to Your will.'

In Likutei Halachos, Birchos Hashachar 5, Reb Nosson writes, "This is the aspect of mishpat that is mentioned in the Rebbe's words in several places; that a person must judge himself on everything, if it is fitting to spend his days like this."

He adds in Likutei Halachos Geirim 3 that "a person is truly in grave danger in this world, and he must judge himself a lot every single day, and think about his ways and awaken his heart to Hashem. This is the inyan of hisbodedus and talking between yourself to Hashem that the Rebbe warned about countless times. As it says so many times in the Rebbe's holy sefarim, that according to the great danger hanging over a person in this world, small or large, due to the evil, there is the great danger of the evil catching hold of him chas veshalom. Therefore, chazal say that every day, a person's yetzer hora strengthens itself over him, and if Hashem wouldn't help him... Therefore, there is no eitza to stand firm against it, only through hisbodedus, which is the aspect of mishpat, as mentioned above. That a person must judge himself which means talk to Hashem and judge himself for everything."

So what does it mean to throw your movements onto Hashem?

When you don't know what Hashem wants from you, that's when you should hand over everything to Hashem that He should lead you however He wants.

As Reb Nosson writes in Likutei Halachos, Simanei Habeheima 4,24: "It is a great rule and wonderful eitza in avodas Hashem for every person in the world whether large or small, whichever madreiga he's on, especially these generations in which the sheker has intensified and confused the world so much. The main eitza against sheker is truth, which means that the person shouldn't fool himself.

Whenever he is unsure and doesn't know the truth, he should think in his heart that he only wants the true truth. And he should beg Hashem that He should give him the merit of the nekudas ha'emes. And afterwards he should hand over all his movements to Hashem. And then however Hashem leads him - that's the truth.

And even if he sees that he already did this several times and he still didn't merit the truth, and even if sometimes he found out afterwards that he blundered with a specific thing, nevertheless, if his kavana was intended for the truth it is all considered truth, because Hashem desires the heart. And as chazal say, 'only that he should focus his heart to heaven.'

Also, who knows the ways of Hashem, maybe that is his way and path to truth that it is impossible for him to merit truth according to his deeds, only through these ways which he passed, because Hashem's ways are inconceivable to us. All these things are impossible to explain with words and in writing, for they are from the things which have no bounds. Nonetheless, truth is truth and whoever wants the true truth and doesn't fool themselves will surely eventually merit the truth."

Can a person truly always return to Hashem, even from the lowest place?

Even in the lowest place, a person can find Hashem and return to Him.

The Rebbe talks about this in Likutei Moharan 33,2 "Even in your place which you are stuck in the home of the klipos, there too you can find Elohis. Because He is mechayeh everything, as it is written, 'ואתה מחיה את כלם.' And from there you can connect yourself to Hashem, and return to Him with complete Teshuvah."

The Rebbe also says in Likutei Moharan 78, "Even someone who is chas veshalom on the absolute lowest madreiga, even if he lies in שאול תחתיות chas veshalom, he should still not despair, and he should fulfil מבטן שאול" – From the depths of the pit, I cried out. And he should strengthen himself with whatever he can, because he too can return and repent and receive chiyus from the Torah through the Tzaddik. And the main thing is that he should strengthen himself with whatever possible. Because there is no yiush in the world at all, (and he said then קיין! איש איז גאר ניט פאר (האנדן) and he emphasized these words greatly, and he said them with great strength, and very wondrous, awesome depth, in order to teach and hint to every single person for all the generations that he shouldn't despair in any manner in the world. No matter what passes over him, however he is, even if fell to the place he fell chas veshalom, after he strengthens

himself however he is, he still has hope to return to Hashem.”

In Likutei Halachos, Ona’ah 3, Reb Nosson writes, “If a person is strong in his mind that even if chas veshalom, he won’t triumph over a nisayon, and even if it’ll be like it’ll be, nevertheless he will always hope to Hashem... then he is guaranteed that he will surely merit complete teshuvah. Because eventually, he will return to Hashem since he is strong in his mind that he won’t get discouraged from anything in the world.

Like we heard from the Rebbe himself, who told us specifically, “Just like you see me (meaning that you know my holiness, that I am a complete tzaddik) nevertheless, if I would now transgress an actual great aveira, I wouldn’t get discouraged at all. I would just be an erliche Yid after the aveira like before. Only later, I would do teshuvah.”

Reb Nosson also writes in Likutei Halachos tefillin 5, “...he should have complete emunah in Hashem, and in the true tzaddikim, and he should strengthen himself in his avodah and not get discouraged from anything, and he shouldn’t lose patience from any confusion that the yetzer hora puts into his mind; confusion and doubts as if there is no hope chas veshalom, due to his bad deeds and the aveiros that he did until now. Because a person mustn’t look at all this at all, as is explained in the words of the Rebbe, and in our words so many times on this subject, how much a person must strengthen himself, because there is no despair at all, and however it is, even if he already fell this fall itself so many countless times, nevertheless there is no yish, and as long as he lives he must strengthen himself to start every time from new.”

How can I convince myself that all the bad that I did will just disappear?

If you believe that you can spoil, believe that you can repair too.

So says the Rebbe in Likutei Moharan 112: “On the subject of hischazkus that a person should get discouraged due to his many wrongdoings and damage which he wrought with his deeds, he said, ‘If you believe that you can damage, believe that you can fix.’”

Reb Nosson writes in Likutei Halachos Maase umatan 4: “Aderaba, a person’s descent should strengthen him even more. Because why did he get discouraged? Only because he himself knows that he transgressed an

aveira chas veshalom. If so, that itself is reason to encourage himself, because since he at least knows that the aveira destroys and damages the upper worlds, then he has emuna. And if he has emuna, then he always has hope. Because 'all Your mitzvos are emuna,' because as long as he has emuna, he'll have a tikkun. And as the Rebbe said to someone who became discouraged, he told him, 'If you believe that you can destroy, believe that you can repair.'"

And in Hilchos Techumin 5, he writes, "As long as a person has emuna, he'll surely return to Hashem, and therefore a person must strengthen himself very much through this itself. This means, through the fact that the yetzer hora wants to make him fall chas veshalom, he should strengthen himself. Because the yetzer hora tries with all kinds of ways to make him fall at all times, by putting into his heart that it is very difficult for him to rectify such aveiros. Especially since there are people who have damaged like they have damaged as they themselves know, by transgressing many big aveiros for long days and years, rachmana litzlon. And there are those who have already wanted to return several times, and they already started doing true teshuva a few times, but then they fell like they fell, each one according to his nefila rachmana litzlon. And therefore, the yetzer hora puts into their hearts every time that there is already no hope chas veshalom, according to the depths of their aveiros.

But in truth, a person can enliven and encourage himself with this itself. Because since I already know that the aveira is such a great sin that it damages so much in the upper worlds, I see that I still have emuna, and since I have emuna, I surely without doubt still have hope. Because since I believe that I can destroy, I can surely repair too, as the Rebbe said explicitly."

Can such an easy tikkun really erase the bad?

That's the yetzer hora talking, trying to convince you not to do it.

As the Rebbe says in Chayi Moharan 492: "Didn't Elisha say to Naaman that he should immerse and he'll become pure, yet he (Naaman) didn't want to believe that such an easy task will cure him. And he said, 'Didn't I bathe in the best healing springs and finest rivers yet I didn't become pure?' Until his servants told him, 'If he would have told you a difficult thing you would have done it, just immerse like he told you to.' Then he listened to his servants and

he bathed in the Yarden seven times and his skin restored and he became pure.

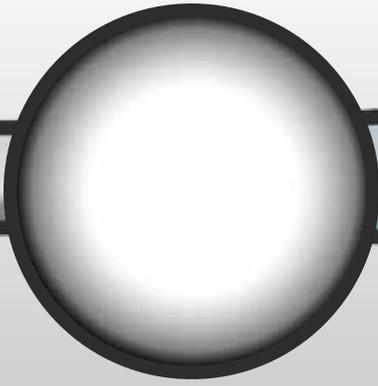
So too, it seems to you that you need to be told difficult things for your healing, and you don't believe that you'll have a complete true cure for your soul with a simple thing that I command you to do.

And this is very useful many times, since sometimes a person prevents himself from doing a holy thing because it is too difficult, due to the many obstacles which prevent him from doing it and he doesn't strengthen himself to break them. And sometimes it is the opposite; he is prevented from doing something holy due to its easiness, since the matter seems so easy for him to do, and therefore he doesn't believe that the life of his soul is dependent on such an easy thing. And the truth is that we need to be careful with a מצוה קלה בבחמורה, an easy mitzvah just like a hard one, and you should do whatever is in your power to do. Because the main obstacles and wiliness of the yetzer hora is only obstacles in the mind. Sometimes he puts into a person's mind that the matter is too difficult for him and he tries to stop him with this. Other times, he makes the matter seem very insignificant until the person doesn't dream that the life of his neshama depends on it, and it's all in order to stop him chas veshalom. Sometimes, this מניעה is even greater than an actual obstacle. But one who goes in simplicity goes reassured, and he doesn't look at any obstacle and confusion in the world at all. And whatever you find that you can do, do."

Is there anything specific which awakens and brings a person to teshuva?

Saying tehillim arouses a person to teshuva, and it is very praiseworthy to be accustomed with it.

The Rebbe says in Likutei Moharan 73: "Whoever wants to merit teshuva should be accustomed to saying tehillim, because saying tehillim is mesugal for teshuva. Through saying tehillim, even someone who doesn't have any hisorerus for teshuva gets awakened to teshuva. And also, through tehillim one is zoiche to reach his specific gate (of teshuvah) and to open the gate. So we find that through tehillim one merits doing teshuva."



The Light of our Lives: Reb Nachman of Breslov

Chapter Three

Like a fish in water, the Rebbe felt right at home between his father's many sefarim. He lapped up the Torah knowledge like someone parched, eagerly drinking his fill. His father's vast selection indeed had what to offer him; Shas, Shulchan Aruch, Poskim, Rishonim and Achronim, Kabbala sefarim, and the more recent Chassidische sefarim which had just begun to emerge. The child's diligence was astounding. He took to the volumes with fervor and passion, swallowing the holy words as fast as he could. Every sefer left a deep impression on him, and he didn't

move from it until its words were engraved upon his heart forever. He could go through each sefer numerous times, until its contents were clear as day to him, and in that way, he became intimately familiar with all the varieties of sefarim available.

For a time, he immersed himself into the sefer 'Reishis Chochmah.' The holy sefer influenced him deeply and was the subject of his studies many times over. So much learning left its mark on him; he became saturated with Torah and yiras shamayim. The contents of every sefer were as clear to him

as if they were arranged on a table before him. And all this were the feats of a young child! With his determination, toil, love of Torah and diligence, and mainly through his countless supplications to Hashem, he merited impossible levels at a very young age!

* * *

Between the Breslover sefarim, there is one modest sefer called 'Sefer Hamiddos.' The Rebbe refers to it as the Sefer Ha'aleph Beis, since it follows the order of the Aleph Beis in discussing every good middah and attribute which a person needs to strive to attain, and the bad traits he should keep away from. The small volume contains an enormous wealth of Torah knowledge spanning the length and breadth of the Torah, with references and quotes to the most diverse sources in Tanach, Gemara and midrashim. In several concise words, a long deep inyan in kabbala is condensed and summarized. A brief glance through the sefer shows an incredible sea of wisdom and yirah, not to mention the deep hasagos which are hidden between the lines.

Reb Tzadok of Lublin was very taken by the sefer, and he composed a

small commentary on it, in which he brings the sources for every middah. Somebody once noticed him poring over it, and asked his permission to borrow the sefer for a short while. But Reb Tzadok refused, declaring, "I can't give it away for even a short while, because it's my chiyus!"

The Rebbe himself praised the sefer very highly. He once commented to his talmid Reb Naftali on it while they were both sitting on a wagon. Holding the Sefer Hamiddos in his hands, he pronounced, "My dear devoted friend! This is what made me into a Yid..."

The stunning truth is hard to absorb: the first part of the sefer was composed by the Rebbe when he was only a small child, around six years old!

The sefer remained hidden for many long years. Nobody knew about it, and the Rebbe didn't spread it until the right time came for him to reveal the treasure.

* * *

In the year 5562, when the Rebbe relocated to the town of Breslov, another of his talmidim by the name of Reb Dov Chayeles made the move together with him. He had left his rabbinical position in

his hometown Lodizshin, feeling that his whole vitality came from the Rebbe and wanting to spend as much time as he could under his wings.

This Reb Dov was a big Talmid Chacham, who derived great pleasure from hearing and telling stories of tzaddikim. Whenever he came to see the Rebbe, he would often recount some tale which he had heard or read about in ancient sefarim, and he would also give over chiddushei torah which he had read. Many times the Rebbe would hold up his hand and announce about one of his insights that it is true ruach hakodesh!

Once he came in to the Rebbe and told him the following story:

There was a distinguished Rosh Yeshivah who had a modest and talented daughter. When she came of age, he searched for a fine bachur who would be a worthy for his catch of a daughter. Indeed, he found the perfect match in his own yeshivah; an exceptional boy from an illustrious family. He spent his days and nights toiling in Torah, completely removed from all worldly matters. The Rosh Yeshivah set his eyes on him and was satisfied with what he saw.

Within a short time, the shidduch was arranged.

The father of the kallah was overjoyed with his good fortune. He had found the perfect boy for his daughter; a bachur who was completely and utterly devoted to Hashem, uninterested in gashmiyus. His mouth was full of praise to Hashem for His great kindness.

After the chasunah, the newly married young man continued with his devotions, unhindered by any worldly matters. His loyal wife gave her full support, and he continued to grow in learning Torah and serving Hashem. He rose to such a high level that he merited something awesome: A malach would reveal itself to him every night and teach him Torah. The young man was beside himself with joy for having reached such a madreiga that a malach itself would come reveal the secrets of Torah to him. He was so excited with it that he decided to keep the matter to himself and not share it with anyone.

But he was unfortunately unaware of one little detail. This malach did not come from the side of holiness, but from the side of tuma'a. Since

the young man had once stumbled with a small sin, the sitra acher had the power and permission to attach itself to him. And so, every night, the malach would come teach the unsuspecting young man Torah, gaining his confidence in a sly manner, until eventually, it decided to strike.

One night, the malach started convincing the young scholar to commit a certain aveira. He promised him that Hashem wanted him to do it, and that he would be doing a great mitzvah with it. Not only would he get schar for doing this aveira, but he would bring Mashiach through it!

The young man was completely confused. How could he do something that Hashem forbade? But here a malach was telling him that Hashem wanted him to do it. So maybe this was a sort of הוראת שעה, and he was supposed to do the aveira? How should he know?

Lost in his dilemma, he decided to consult with his wife. She was a pious woman and he wanted to hear her opinion. But upon hearing his tale of the malach and his proposal, his wife was alarmed. The fear of Heaven was deeply entrenched within her and she wouldn't go against Hashem's will even if a malach would command

her to do so. However, her husband wouldn't relent, and he insisted that the malach was compelling him to do the aveira.

At a loss, she turned to her father and asked his advice on the matter. The Rosh Yeshivah trembled when he heard his daughter repeat the story of the malach's revelation and his request. At once, he understood that this malach must be from the side of tuma'a, and he knew that he would need to act quickly, with wisdom and wit.

He immediately called for his son-in-law. Not wanting to shock him with the news that his nocturnal visitor was actually extremely dangerous, he gently told him that his holy malach might not be so holy after all. The confused son-in-law didn't know what to think anymore. Who should he believe? Everyone was turning out to be completely different than it seemed, and he didn't know what the real picture was.

His father-in-law saw his bewilderment, and calmed him down. Then he told him, "Every malach has the letters of the aleph beis engraved on its forehead. On a holy malach, the letters of Hashem's Name shine. But on the forehead of a malach from the side of tuma'a,

these letters are dark. So here is your sign: When the malach comes to you tonight, check his forehead. And if you see that he is indeed from the side of tuma'a, separate yourself from him immediately!"

His father-in-law gave him several amulets and sheimos for him to protect himself against the malach, who would surely be angry that his fat prey had slipped from his fingers and would want revenge. The young man accepted his father-in-law's words and readied himself for the night, when the great test would be carried out.

Evening fell, and the young man remained alone in the Beis Medrash as was his usual custom. He sat in his place, waiting with trepidation for the malach to arrive. What would his forehead show? Who was right and who was wrong, in this intrigue? The malach appeared, and the young man's forehead was covered in beads of sweat. Nervously, he lifted his eyes and stole a glance at the malach's forehead. The letters of Hashem's Name were dark. He almost swooned...

The malach realized that the young man had recognized the truth and immediately tried harming him, but the young man was quicker than him. Following the Rosh Yeshiva's instructions to the letter, he managed to escape from its clutches and save himself from the malach forever.

* * *

Hearing the amazing story from Reb Dov Chayeles, the Rebbe went into an intense fervor and dveikus. Sitting still for several moments and pondering his high holy thoughts, he suddenly cried out in a fiery voice, "Baruch Hashem, by us all the letters of the aleph beis glow and shine!" and he immediately took out the Sefer Ha'aleph Beis – the Sefer Hamiddos. From then on, it was spread over the entire world.

The holy sefer which the Rebbe revealed at this opportunity, which he had already written while still a young child, is only small indication of the greatness he reached as a small boy.

To be continued...



The King who Decreed Conversion

A story of Nissim

Once there was a king who decreed expulsion upon his country by way of forced conversion. That is that anyone who wanted to remain in the country would have to recant his faith, and if he did not, he would be expelled from the country. Some gave up their belongings and wealth and left in poverty, in order to retain their faith and remain Jewish. But some of them felt for their belongings and wealth, and so they stayed there, as anussim. In private they practiced the halachos of Yidden, but in public they were not able to behave as Yidden.

Then the first king passed away and his son became king. He began to

rule the country with an iron fist. He conquered several states, and had great wisdom. Because he ruled over his ministers with severity they spoke out against him and conspired to overthrow him, and to obliterate him and his descendants. There was among the ministers one of the forced converts. He reasoned to himself, "Why, after all, did I stay here as a forced convert? Because I valued my wealth and my possessions. Now, if the country will be without a king, the people will swallow each other alive, for a state cannot exist without a king." Therefore, he decided to go and inform the king without their knowing. He went and told the king that they were conspiring

against him as described. The king investigated to see if the matter was true. When he saw that it was, he stationed guards. On the night that the ministers made their attempt against the king they were caught, and the king judged each one accordingly.

The king asked the 'converted' minister, "What honor can I bestow upon you for having saved me and my descendants? If I thought to make you a minister, well, you already are one. If I were to give you riches, you are already wealthy. Tell me what honor you would like, and I will surely grant it to you."

The minister asked, "But will you really fulfil my request?" The king answered, "Yes, I will surely fulfil it." The minister said, "Swear to me by your crown and your kingdom." So the king swore. Then the minister said, "My main honor would be that I be permitted to be Jewish in public, to don tallis and tefillin in public." The king was very annoyed, for no one was allowed to be Jewish in all his kingdom, but he had no choice because he had sworn that he would give him whatever he would want. In the morning the minister donned tallis and tefillin publicly.

After this, the king passed away and his son became king. He began to

rule with gentleness, for he saw how they wanted to wipe out his father. He conquered many nations and he had very great wisdom. He gathered together all the astrologers to tell him how his descendants might be cut off in order that he protect himself from it. They told him that his descendants would not be cut off as long as he guarded himself from a bull and a ram. They wrote this down in their book of annals. He commanded his sons that they should also rule in the same manner as he, with gentleness, and he passed on.

Then his son became king, and he began to rule with severity, as had his grandfather. He conquered many states, and came upon an idea: He decreed that no bulls or rams be found in his kingdom, in order that his descendants should not be cut off. He then thought that he had nothing to fear, and he ruled the country with a strong hand and became great in wisdom.

He then came upon an idea how to conquer the world without war: There are seven regions of the world, that is, the world is divided into seven parts, and there are seven shooting stars, each one shining on one of the seven regions, and there are also seven varieties of metals, and each one of the seven

stars shines on one of these metals. So he went and gathered all seven types of metals, and commanded to be brought the portraits of all the kings, which are made of gold and which hang in their palaces. From all of these, he made a man. His head was gold, his torso was of silver, and so all the other limbs were of other metals. All of the seven metals were included within him. He positioned the man on top of a high mountain, and all the seven stars shined upon this man. When some person needed advice or to know whether to commence some business or not, he would stand next to the limb made of the metal that was native to his region. He would focus on the question of whether he should do this business or not. When it was appropriate for him to do it, the limb would light up and shine, and if not, it would darken. Through this, the king conquered the whole world, and gathered great wealth.

But this man who he made out of the seven varieties of metal only had this ability if the king would cast down the haughty and raise up the lowly. So the king sent out invitations to all the generals and other ministers with high ranking posts and honors, and they all came. And he cast them down, and took away their posts. Even those

who had positions which they had earned in his great grandfather's time, he took away their posts. He also raised up lowly ones and appointed them in their place. Among the ones that the king sought to cast down was the Jewish minister described before. The king asked him, "What is your position and appointment?" He answered, "My position is that I be allowed to be Jewish in public, in return for the favor that I did for your grandfather." The king took this away from him, and he returned to being an annus.

One time, the king went to sleep and dreamed that he saw a clear sky, and saw all the twelve signs of the zodiac. And he saw that the bull and the ram, which were among the signs, were laughing at him. He awoke in great anger and became very frightened, and he commanded them to bring the book of annals. He saw written there that his descendants would be cut off by a bull and a ram. A great fear befell him. He related this to the queen, and a great fear fell also upon her and on their children. He became very distraught and called to all his dream interpreters, and each one interpreted differently, but none of their interpretations satisfied him. A terrible fear befell him. Then one wise man came to him and told

him that he had a tradition from his father that there are three hundred and sixty-five courses of the sun, and there is a place where all the three hundred sixty-five courses shine. A staff of iron grows there, and whoever suffers from fear, if he comes to this staff, he is saved from the fear.

This found favor in the eyes of the king. So he went to that place with his wife, his children and all his family, and with the wise man who had informed him about it. Along the way, there stands an angel who is appointed over anger. Through anger, an angel of destruction is created, and this angel is appointed over all the destructive forces. Those who travel there ask him the way. For there is a straight path for people, and there is one filled with mud, and one filled with potholes and imperfections, and other various roads. There is also a road in which there is a fire, four miles from which one is burned. (The king asked him the way, and he directed them to the road with the fire.) They went there, and the wise man kept looking ahead to see whether they were coming to this fire, for he had a tradition from his father that there is such a fire there.

Presently, he saw the fire, and he

saw that walking through it were kings and Yidden wearing tallis and tefillin. The wise man said to the king, "I have a tradition from my father that four miles from the fire, one is burned up, therefore I don't want to go any closer. If you want to go, then go." The king thought to himself that being that other kings were going through the fire, he would also be able to. The wise man answered him, "I have a tradition handed down from my father, and therefore I don't want to go. If you want to go, go." So the king and his family went, the fire caught them and he and all his family were consumed and cut off.

When the wise man came back home, the ministers were dumbfounded at how the king and his family had been consumed, for he had guarded himself from a bull and a ram. How could it be that he and his family were destroyed? Then the 'converted' minister spoke up and said, "It was because of me that he was cut off. The astrologers saw, but they did not know what they saw. With the skin of a bull, tefillin are made, and from the wool of a ram, the fringes of a tallis are made, and it was because of them that the king and his family were cut off. Those kings in whose countries Yidden lived and wore

tallis and tefillin, could go through the fire with no harm to them at all. But our king, in whose country Yidden were not allowed to live and wear tallis and tefillin, was cut off. That is why the bull and the ram in the zodiac were laughing at him, for the astrologers saw but they did not know what they saw, and so he and his descendants were cut off.

למה רגשו גוים (Tehillim Kapital Beis)
There are many allusions to the story in this kapitel. ננתקה את מותרותימו. 'Let us break their bonds.' – the bonds are of leather, alluding to tefillin. עבותימו 'their cords' – these are ropes, alluding to tzitzis. The nations desired to do away with the holy customs of the Yidden, but 'He who dwells in the heavens laughs,' for the bull and the ram in the firmament laughed at the gentile king. Fortunate is the one who will know something in these stories, which are through great secrets of the Torah.



Women's Views

*How can we as women aware of the Tzaddik's
Rosh Hashana, relate to the Yom Tov on a
deeper level?*

The Rebbe teaches me pashtus. Rosh Hashana is being mamlich our King, and when this thought takes first place in my head throughout Rosh Hashana, it helps me to serve Him happily with every surprise that comes up. When things don't go to plan (*as they generally do*), I stop, remember 'Hamelech,' - this is His Master Plan, and I try to serve Him happily with His plan.

Miriam Frank, Beis Shemesh

In Sichos Horan 21 it is written that on Rosh Hashana one should be a chochom and think only good

thoughts, namely - that Hashem will do good with him! To me, this means to choose to believe and to contemplate the love that Hashem has for me and that He sees the good in me. (Because there is also the other side of the story which we all know about). Hashem has nachas from us when we think good about ourselves, just like a mother is happy when her child shows off his accomplishments rather than his shortcomings. We should be zoiche to live with our nekudos tovos and bring them to Hashem with pride

E. Singer, Brooklyn, NY

The number one thing not to panic and be broken that we're not doing enough, because that incapacitates you right there, and that's where you stay. We don't need to keep checking if we're connected deep enough because we are tams after all! We are just so delighted that our other half is at the Rebbe that we are in a hyper mood (yeah right) (ideally) and then we're on a roll, doing more mitzvos, better hisbodedus and more sincere teshuva. Additionally, I feel that because our other half is there near the Rebbe, we too get silent signals from the Rebbe which make us feel so connected.

Malky Lebowitz, Monsey, NY

In the past, Rosh Hashana was a very frightening day for me. How can I stay calm when I'm being judged by the מלך מלכי המלכים?

Burich Hashem, since my husband goes to the Rebbe's Kibbutz in Uman- I know for sure that I have the best lawyer on my side. And even more, the Rebbe said "הַשֵּׁם יִתְבַּרְךָ נָתַן לִי זֹאת בְּמִתְנָה שְׂאֵנִי יוֹדֵעַ מֵהוּ וְרֹאשׁ־הַשָּׁנָה" - He knows the case well and I can trust him. The lawyer's guidance is as follows: "בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה

צְרִיכִין לֵהוּיֹת חֶכֶם שְׂיִחְשַׁב רַק מִחֲשָׁבוֹת טוֹבוֹת שְׂיִיטִיב הַשֵּׁם יִתְבַּרְךָ עִמּוֹ, וְצְרִיכִין לֵהוּיֹת שְׂמִיחַ בְּרֹאשׁ־הַשָּׁנָה" so I know what my job is! Just to be happy and think positive thoughts- generating a very calm and even joyful yom tov! Ashreinu!!

Beily Friedman, Brooklyn NY

It's a good idea to get together before Rosh Hashana with your family or friends to discuss the greatness of the Tzaddik's Rosh Hashana. Get your little ones involved too. My son Nachman (age 2) is already saying "Tatty is going to Uman for Rosh Hashanah, can I come along?" Dance with them, sing with them. On Rosh Hashanah, get together for seudas and talk about how holy our Rebbe's Rosh Hashanah is. (Would you perhaps invite women that are not so on board, or new to our amazing derech, and help them ease into our haven?) Don't forget to visualize the Tzion on Rosh Hashanah. Although our husbands are there physically and spiritually, we can be there spiritually. Have an amazing Yom tov and may we be zoiche to connect to the Rebbe wherever we are.

Rochel Leah Gale, Brooklyn, NY

I am simply comforted by the fact that on such a serious time of judgment and opportunities for Teshuva & connection, I send my husband to the top of the line advocate - סניגר out there!

That's my deeper connection and relation to Rosh Hashana and the Rebbe. It's as simple and "undeeep" as that.

*Malky Bergstein, Staten Island,
NY*

This is one Rosh Hashana story:

Here we go again. I'm standing in front of my closet and *I need a sewing machine!* I have overextended my credit at kind neighbors and sisters, and it seemed a pity to send in my alterations when I could sew so well.

I took an envelope and wrote my name on it. Underneath I put 'Sewing Machine – Donations Welcome.' It took years, but the day came when I counted 5000 shekels in various bills and nominations in that envelope. Yes, it was also used as a free-loan gemach.

Now, this lady wanted something good. I attacked the ads with childlike glee and settled on a digital Bernina, newest model.

It was Elul. We are Breslov. Free

ticket to Uman to whoever can (not) guess what happened next.

My husband was in a financial state. How would he pull it off this year? His lip fell open in wondrous gratitude when he beheld an envelope on his pillow with a few hundred dollars inside, marked: *Sacrifice for my Rebbe. Please daven for your wife bas your shvigger.*

I bought a simple sewing machine. It doesn't purr noiselessly. It isn't digital, nor touch, but it does the job. I have mended countless pants and ripped seams, lifted hems and taken them down again, changed a curtain to a tablecloth and created matching linen sets for the kids. All the while feeling rich. I gave something to the Rebbe. That was an investment that can never go sour. **"From whom I take, I give."**

Me and my sewing machine, we have a unique relationship. When she balks, I whisper, "*Rebbe Nachman, tell her!*" So far, she's always listened.

Aidy Hoffman, Beis Shemesh

*email raysof148@gmail.com to
answer in the following issue's
Women's Views*