

# Don't Complain

Based Upon the Teachings of  
Rabbi Nachman of Breslov  
and of his student Rabbi Nosson of Breslov

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# **DON'T COMPLAIN**

Valuable advice on how to see the positive side of things and how to rid oneself of all kinds of complaints

Based on the Teachings of  
Rabbi Nachman of Breslov  
and of his student  
Rabbi Nosson of Breslov

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## 1. Look Objectively At Your Life

My dear friend, no matter what hardships you're facing in life, be strong and thankful to G'd for all the abundant kindness and mercy that he has shown you. Granted, life is bitter and fraught with all sorts of problems and woes; and yes, you feel constantly defeated and discouraged as your situation gets relentlessly worse. Nevertheless, be grateful to G'd for everything and don't complain! Just look around you and observe what's occurring to others. It's frightening! With all the tragedies, catastrophes, and sicknesses you hear about, you can't help but be filled with gratitude and appreciation to G'd. If you complain - or worse, presumptuously question G'd's ways - you're only inviting on

yourself even greater suffering. Incessant complaining is part of a vicious cycle-that prevents you from ever having satisfaction out of life. Because a person is always in a state of want, he will constantly feel lacking and invariably find that which to complain about. To feel truly fulfilled in life you must stop complaining and start appreciating G'd for all He's given you. Look objectively at your life and you will discover so much for which to be thankful. Just consider all of G'd's graciousness towards you; you have your health! And hasn't G'd helped you through life so far? Feeling overwhelmed by all your problems you're convinced that your situation is beyond all hope and repair, but just remember G'd's kindness is abundant and his compassion exceedingly great. Visit any hospital and just witness the suffering there and you will quickly realize

that you have nothing to complain about. On the contrary; you will feel so impelled to give grateful thanks to G'd for all the undeserved kindness He has granted you. Therefore my dear friend, quit complaining! Incessant complaining will only result in added suffering. Do you need this? Aren't you better off being grateful to G'd and always thanking Him? If you want to see improvement in your life spiritually and materialistically, then heed this advice and you will have it good all the days of your life.

## **2. A Merciful Father**

My dear friend, think about it! Why do you complain so much? Haven't you noticed

what's occurring in the world today? Don't you realize that there are people in such distress - financial or medical - far greater than yours, without any avenue of escape or hope? Have you been brought to such a brink of despair? Be realistic: your situation is not really as miserable as you imagine, nor are you as a pathetic person as you think. Keep in mind, G'd is a merciful Father and He will certainly have compassion on you. Remember! Things could be much worse, so why complain? Start a new trend in your life by taking the time to express appreciation by saying thank you to G'd for all His benevolence. Consequently you will feel the impetus to then ask G'd for all that you need and desire. For when a person acts appreciative, by continuously thanking G'd for all His thorough kindness, his heart rouses so with ardor, that he willingly

submits to G'd for all his needs and desires. It is for this reason that our Sages instructed us to format our prayers as such: begin with gratitude to G'd for all the kindness of the past, and then follow with an appeal for all the needs of the present; for one act depends on the other. So, my dear friend, cease complaining! Remember, G'd is great and His deliverance is awesome; He will certainly not forsake you if only you remain determinedly steadfast and not despair. Always appreciate what G'd and others have done for you by saying 'thank you' and just witness how your popularity will rise. In general, people are disinclined to listen to complaining because they have their own share of hardships and problems, so how can you expect them to endure yours? Be an encouraging and supportive person instead. Highlight to others the positive si

de of life and inform them how complaining is senseless. In this supportive role, the quality of your own life will improve; your life will be sweet and pleasant, prolonged and enriched - if you would only stop complaining. Mind you, complaining is the foremost handicap in a person's pursuit of happiness in life. The grateful person on the other hand, preaches optimism to others, instilling them with a firm trust in G'd, by imbuing them with a sense of hope that things will get better, and that there is a light at the end of their tunnel. He wins the admiration of his fellow men and merits to see all his darkness turn to light. Indeed, you can only benefit if you would but rightfully adopt this perspective on life; to recognize always, only the express good in life. In truth, G'd is constantly performing kindness with each and every one of us

however, as the adage goes, "A person is blind to his own miracle." Yet, in today's society, where life is so precarious, that it's a veritable miracle if a person leaves home in the morning and arrives back unharmed, it is incumbent on him to pay homage and tribute to G'd. Fortunate is the one who bears this in mind and stops complaining; he will enjoy life in love, happiness and with the admiration of his fellow man.

### **3. G'd Continuously Sustains**

Endure all that you must in life without complaining so much, because it will only make your suffering worse. To achieve genuine success you have to have a positive attitude in life, while complaining will only

make you feel the full weight of your problems and hardships. Indeed, what do you have to complain about? Naked you arrived in this world and naked will your return, therefore, what's to be gained by complaining and always being bitter, depressed and contentious? Resign yourself to your fate and be a positive person who resolves only to see the brighter side of life; and even though your pain, suffering and misfortune make you so short-sighted, that your situation seems oppressively bleak and dreary - understand, this is merely an illusion. In actuality, nothing whatsoever exists independent of G'd. G'd continuously sustains, maintains and promotes all of creation entirely; whether mineral, plant, animal, or mankind - all in essence are inspired by G'd. Were a person to attach himself spiritually to G'd, his whole life

would change completely for the better - and how much more so if he would confide in G'd by revealing all that he feels in his heart in his own language. Therefore, my dear friend, strive to be optimistic in life, guard yourself from despair and muffle all your complaints against G'd. Be grateful to G'd, instead, and offer thanks for all the undeserved kindness you received and you will surely see improvement in your life. The person who perpetually thanks G'd and actively seeks the good qualities in himself and others, is always growing and developing himself; while bitterness and stagnation are the lot of the complainer. Therefore, endeavor not to complain, G'd forbid, about anyone and certainly not about G'd himself and you can expect to see marked progress in your life and greater opportunities.

## 4. Focus On The Good

Why are you constantly complaining about your ordeal in life and all the difficulty it entails? Why not focus on all the good that G'd has granted you. Indeed, if you seek only the good, then you will find only good. People, however, are naturally inclined towards the negative aspects of their life; all that hurts them; their problems, conflicts, anguish, debts, illnesses and debilities. Why not recognize all the abundant kindness that G'd has displayed towards you? Recount all the benevolence and thorough kindness that G'd has performed for you and all the complaints will vanish. On the contrary, you will feel impelled to praise and laud G'd for all His kindness and compassion, as you become

sensitively aware that all is owned to G'd's graciousness. Indeed, this is how one should conduct themselves in life: seek only the good in everything and everybody and never, ever complain! My dear friend, cultivate this virtue of never complaining about any person. Remember! No one owes you anything. If you succeed, then you will rise to a position of influence as others flock to you for moral support and encouragement. And, as a reward for your gratitude and appreciation to G'd for His kindness, He will supply you with further benevolence and bounty. For a person's action elicit a Heavenly response in kind, based on a Divine system of reciprocity: If you engage in constantly thanking G'd for all the good you have received, then you become the recipient of even more good. If you express only dissatisfaction, however,

by complaining, then your supply of goodness is terminated and you are condemned instead, to a life of misery. Every person's fate is subject to the dynamics of this ongoing process, so be wise and prudent and don't complain, whatsoever. You will, as a result, be privileged to see all the good contained in this world and discern all the mysteries locked into every facet of creation. You will merit to recognize G'd's splendor and enjoy a spiritually fulfilled life.

## **5. Reach Out And Give To Others**

My dear friend, what do you accomplish by complaining? Complaining is useless and will only complicate matters and make your

problems worse. People will not tolerate all your whining and complaints, as they are troubled with their own share of problems in life, and hardly have the patience for yours. Why waste time seeking their sympathy? Give yourself encouragement and reach out and give others moral support and just witness how many new friendships you will form. No one is willing to suffer the complaints of a bitter person nor are they interested in listening to other people's problems. Do you want to turn people off? So why do you persistently complain to everyone? Save your complaints rather, for the more therapeutic environment of the support group where they can be addressed and resolved. With mutual support and encouragement you will find there, you will develop into a caring person who can help and offer support to

others. You will attract many friends, because people are more disposed towards those that give them encouragement and inspire hope. Therefore, don't be idle, go out and cheer up others and make them happy; give them support and encouragement and you, in turn, will feel uplifted. This is the secret to winning many friends in life and becoming a success.

## **6. A Fundamental Lesson**

Be a cheerful and optimistic person; not a complainer. People will come to despise you if you complain too much, and once hated, they will be vindicated by your suffering and pain, as they derive malicious joy from all your misfortunes. Don't be

victimized! Alleviate some of the suffering of others by lending them a sympathetic ear and strive to lift their spirits. As for yourself, however, make it a rule always to respond "thank G'd, everything's O.K." even in the face of adversity, and G'd will verily respond in kind by coming to your assistance. In addition you will become beloved by others, by virtue of your positive spirit, and all will desire your friendship. Take this matter seriously, because it's a fundamental lesson in life which, when hearkened to, can improve one's personality entirely. If you complain, however, satisfaction in life will always elude you, and you will remain a broken person and a failure. To enjoy success and a long meaningful life means to never complain, but rather always be grateful and show appreciation to G'd for all His kindness. Fortunate is the one who

never complains to anyone about his situation - no matter how dire and just continuously offers thanks to G'd for everything. He will have it good in this world and the next.

## **7. G'd's Desire For Your Repentance**

Imbue yourself with simple faith. Recognize G'd's sovereignty over the entire universe and realize that all phenomenon are His manifestation. Therefore, how can you be so offended when others harass and torment you? Rather, seek refuge in G'd, who is solely responsible for your being aggrieved. Understand, that it is G'd who orchestrated painful circumstances in your life in order to awaken you to return to

Him. Perfect faith is predicated on the belief that every event, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is controlled by G'd entirely and that all activities occurring in the world are under His authority. Indeed, in the midst of all your trials and tribulations, lies G'd's invisible presence. Know, that all of life's vicissitudes are willed by the grace of G'd, for your benefit out of His desire for your repentance. As it were, G'd contrives circumstances in your life, involving your children, neighbors, relatives, and friends to deliberately frustrate you in order to motivate you to return to Him, in sincere contrition. So why not take advantage of this G'd given opportunity to reach out to Him in supplication, begging him to rescue you from life's dilemmas. For prayer and supplication are the gateway to return to G'd - if only you persevere, then ultimately

you will emerge from your dire situation. Don't sneer sarcastically, rather give this matter your utmost consideration. Incessant complaining is symptomatic of a serious crisis of faith, because a true believer recognizes that other than G'd, there is nothing, so how can you complain? With a submissive heart and humbled spirit present yourself to G'd and rest assured He will not forsake you. There is nothing more cherished by G'd than sheer faith. For belief in G'd's absolute sovereignty over the universe down to the last detail, without contesting His ways - even if it entails your own personal suffering - has tremendous impact in Heaven. By suffering in silence, you are fostering peace in the Upper Worlds and spiritually accomplishing their unification. Indeed, how precious in the eyes of G'd are the acts of a Jew, who is

striving for even greater intimacy with his Creator and who seeks shelter under His wings in times of need. Therefore, my dear friend, never, ever complain! Just remain steadfast in you trust in G'd's power to help you and you will generate peace in all the worlds and become the recipient of G'd's benevolence and utter salvation.

## **8. A New Awareness**

Understandably you are struggling in life, nonetheless, don't hurl complaints at Heaven and certainly don't have the audacity to speak against G'd. During a moment of weakness, when a person is languishing in pain and feeling very vulnerable he is likely to place the blame on

G'd - an act which is morally reprehensible and only invites even greater suffering. Reconcile with G'd for any past offensive and presumptuous remarks you may have uttered and make an honest return to Him. On the road to return, you will abandon your former existence of confusion, where your muddled mind, relentlessly gnawed with doubts, vagueness, and unhealthy skepticism, left you feeling bewildered and full of angst - only to be met by a sense of peace and relief, at having chosen to come back to G'd. Then you will proclaim, with definitiveness, G'd righteousness for all you underwent, as you come to understand that all His actions were out of love and compassion for you. Heartened by this new awareness of G'd's great kindness you will overcome all your hardships and difficulties and they will fade into oblivion. Therefore,

my dear friend, make a serious effort to return to G'd, withdraw all your complaints, and certainly refrain from any impudent remarks against G'd. Your sorrow to joy. You must care for others by inspiring them with hope and encouragement. Remember, too, to thank G'd every day and you will grow ever more hopeful and be worthy of Divine deliverance in ways you couldn't even imagine. You will complain nevermore for you will enjoy only goodness in your life always.

A person has to fill himself with simple faith in G'd to such a degree that when his eyes look at this corporeal world they see nothing but the truth of G'd's existence; when he sits, he is aware that G'd is sitting next to him; and when he is on the street,

he realizes that G'd is with him. This person serves G'd in all his ways.

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Faith in our Sages is such a powerful force that with it a person can actually see the Sages he believes in.

When a person learns the words of a Sage, he should visualize that the Sage is standing at his side (see Talmud Yerushalmi, Shekalim, Chapter 2). Once a person accustoms himself to this, he is always surrounded by the greatest Sages, and he fears no one.

Rabbi Nossen, Rabbi Nachman's principal student, had this ability. After Rabbi Nachman died, his followers used to meet on Rosh Hashanah in the town of Uman (in the Ukraine), where he was buried. One

year, after the evening prayers on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, Rabbi Nossen said with great fervor, "I believe that Rabbi Nachman is here; and I see him! And if Rabbi Nachman is here, then the 'seven shepherds' (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aron, Joseph and King David) are also here." And he began to shout excitedly, "I see them! I see them!"

What does the idea of "faith in Sages" mean?

It means that a person believes that the Sages can open his eyes so that he can look at himself with complete candor. If he can really see himself as he is; if he can ask himself. What is my situation? What have I done until now? How have my bad acts spoiled me? What am I doing now? - then he has true faith in Sages.

But if not, he is merely fooling himself.

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Once, the Czar Nicholas the First, published an anti-Semitic decree. A number of Jewish leaders were approached by their followers with the request that they pray for the Jews, but they answered that the decree was G'd's punishment for the acts of bad Jews; "and what can we do if G'd caused this decree because of them?"

But when Rabbi Nossen heard this, he said that to the contrary - Rabbi Nachman taught us (Likutei Moharan 5) that a person should say, "The world was created for me" - and therefore it is my responsibility to do all I can to fix it. If there is a decree, it relates to me and not to others.

When has a person reached the level of truth? When, if he is faced with something wrong, he looks in himself for the cause. But if he only tries to throw the blame on others, and to say that they have caused bad heavenly decrees, then even though he be a genuinely religious Jew, he is - in Rabbi Nachman's phrase - "a deranged tzaddik". In one of Rabbi Nachman's tales, a group of these "deranged tzaddikim" beat each other and blame each other for their situation (see Rabbi Nachman's Tales #3).

The more a person approaches truth, the more does he realize how much is dependent on him. But if he merely blames others, that is the greatest of falsehoods.

Rabbi Nachman gave us the great gift of being able to really look at ourselves and to see where we stand.

This is the gift of "hissbodedut" - the practice of speaking to G'd in our own words. With this tool, a person can always judge himself. Where is he? What has he done wrong? What has he accomplished?

The more a person speaks to G'd in this way, the more does he fill himself with truth; and the more does he cling to the essence of life - G'd Himself.

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Rabbi Nachman once said that "G'd loves a 'fried Chasid'". He was alluding to a person who despite all the troubles he has suffered still holds firm, unweakened. That constitutes a person's greatness.

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Rabbi Nachman said that a person should not subject himself to unnecessary strictures (Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom # 235).

What does that mean? Whenever a person isn't sure whether or not to do something beyond the basics of Jewish law, that is an unnecessary stricture. A person should simply exert himself in constant service of G'd; when he stops to think whether or not to do something - for instance, whether or not to wear a tallit kattan (four cornered, fringed garment) when he goes to bed he is engaging in unnecessary strictures.

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A person should be extraordinarily joyful. But we live in an upside-down world. If a person is continuously happy, people say he's crazy. But if he walks about depressed and worried, then he's considered normal.

Happy is the person who ignores these illusions and is constantly joyful.

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A person should only look at the good that is in the world; he should consider that the Jews are a good people who fulfill G'd's Torah.

By thinking only good, a person can draw all Jews after him to return to the way of the Torah. In addition, he can also draw all manner of goodness to himself, because that which he wishes for others will also accrue to him.

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The perfection of a Jew consists of his clinging to G'd so completely that he sees before his eyes only the letters of G'd's name. How is this attained? Through

constant Torah learning and prayer. As Rabbi Nachman said, "A person's lips should never rest."

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Rabbi Nachman told a story of a merchant and a poor man (Rabbi Nachman's Stories #6). The merchant helped set the poor man on his feet, but then the poor man repaid evil for good and tried to do away with the merchant's son.

The merchant symbolizes the tzaddik, and the poor man is the person who needs the tzaddik's help. At first, the tzaddik helps the person tremendously. But then this person turns against the tzaddik. Once he can stand on his own two feet, he tries to eradicate the tzaddik from his thoughts, and convinces himself that he never needed anyone but himself. It is ones foremost

obligation to always remember and appreciate the great benefits he received from the tzaddik.

A person must not be psychologically reliant on anyone. His only desire should be to cling to G'd and not to need anyone else.

Nevertheless, Rabbi Nachman said that a person should be part of a community of people serving G'd.

But there is no contradiction. When it comes to the affairs of this world, a person should turn his face to the wall and immerse himself in Torah study and prayer. He doesn't need to spend his hours chatting away. But when it comes to serving G'd, then it is important to have friends and even to spend hours with them in mutual support.

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A person has to purify his eyes so as not to look at immodest sights. He has to work at this even in his own home for instance, he shouldn't gaze idly out the window. And of course, when he goes in the street, he has to work especially hard to avoid looking at immodest places.

Before going out to the street, a person should fortify himself with faith, and prepare himself to see only the G'dliness that resides within everything.

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Rabbi Nachman told a story (Rabbi Nachman's Tales #12) about a country of rich people. Each person had a flag, and the richer he was, the bigger was his flag. The

"master of prayer," however, desired to abolish this system.

The flag symbolizes a person's face. When a person has a lot of money, he is proud and his face shines; but a poor person is humble and depressed.

The tzaddik, however, who is the "master of prayer", wants to eradicate this. He teaches us to only cling to G'd and not be concerned with money; our faces should always shine with the joy of cleaving - to the essence of life - G'd.

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One can learn how to serve G'd from everyday events. For instance, there once was a peddler who was selling sunglasses on a street in Tel Aviv, and was crying out, "Buy sunglasses! It's a pity to ruin your

eyes!" A tzaddik that was passing by remarked, "Listen well to the words of the peddler, for he is reminding a person not to ruin his eyes by gazing at immodest sights".

Another example: The government maintains firefighters, and when they go to put out a fire, they blare sirens and horns. This can remind a person that he should always be prepared to fight the fires of his passions with crying out to G'd in prayer.

Happy is the person who can learn how to serve G'd from everything that happens around him!

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