

Illusions

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

Contents

1. [Illuminate Your Years](#)
2. [Everyone Has An Imagination](#)
3. [Correct Your Immediate Problems](#)
4. [Free From Worries](#)
5. [The Root of Most Suffering](#)
6. [Succeed Both Physically and Spiritually](#)
7. [The Imaginative Faculties](#)
8. [Give yourself over to G'd](#)
9. [No One But G'd Really Understands](#)

10. [The Only Way to Escape Problems](#)
 11. [The Source of Delusions](#)
 12. [A Life Consonant With Reality](#)
 13. [180-Degree Turn For The Better](#)
 14. [In G'd's Hands](#)
 15. [Elements of Divine Spirituality](#)
 16. [A Life In Tune With Reality](#)
 17. [A Prayer to Attain Freedom](#)
 18. [Rabbi Nachman's Sayings](#)
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ILLUSIONS

Imagining that people are hostile to you
can wreck your well-being, both
physical and spiritual.

This booklet describes a healthy
alternative, showing how you can use
your imagination in a powerful,
positive manner.

Based on the Teachings of
Rabbi Nachman of Breslov
and of his student
Rabbi Nossou of Breslov.

1. Illuminate Your Years

My dear fellow-Jew, be aware, that a person's sufferings touch him only through his imaginative faculty.

A person who imagines things that are untrue will certainly suffer. He will think that other people hate him when they don't; he may, due to low self-esteem, deny his competence, and imagine that his life is subject to the whims of those around him.

When a person's delusions are deeply entrenched, it is difficult for him to root them out. They are so much a part of his reality that he doesn't question them. He just allows them to poison his life, never realizing that his suffering is due to a handful of delusions.

Surely you want to begin living a happy, fresh life; to taste sweetness in your days; to illuminate your years with the light of clarity. So leave

behind your delusions; stop focusing on other people.

Instead, fill yourself with a deep faith in G'd. Be aware that there is no existence independent of Him; that everything is, in its essence, complete divinity; and that you, and the entire world, are entirely in His hands. When you realize this, you will see how ludicrous it is to be obsessed with other people's actions. You will see that everything is up to G'd.

Your deep faith in G'd will liberate you from your compulsive delusions. Your outlook and situation will change for the better.

A person who is filled with delusions is ill; he needs to get well; and the cure is close at hand.

2. Everyone Has An Imagination

Everyone has an imagination. The question is, how does one use it?

First of all, we have to clarify what imagination is.

Imagination is the most primitive mode of thought the brain possesses. And the human brain itself is a vehicle for the essence of a person - which is his soul.

When a person purifies himself and turns to G'd, his imagination is also purified. Then his imagination is in close communication with his soul. And his soul, in turn, is in close communication with G'd. "I will be imagined by the prophets," says G'd (Hosea 12) - the imagination of the prophet is so pure that G'd can fill it with divine insights.

But when a person is still crippled inside, his imagination isn't in communication with his soul. It is diseased - and it can hurt him, thwart him, and stunt his life.

If his thoughts and imagination were pure, he would think only of -G'd; everything would turn his consciousness to divinity; and his face would be suffused with an awareness of the Creator. But

since he is far from that, he only uses his imagination for fantasies about how other people are trying to hurt him, and how his life is filled with bitterness. If sufficiently extreme, this perversion of the imaginative faculties can flood him with such resentment against himself, against G'd, and against others that he is incapacitated.

Surely you wish to live a good and happy life. Surely you want to cleanse yourself. The royal road to accomplish this is that of thinking good and healthy thoughts. Let everything remind you of G'd; search after Him constantly. Be aware that there is no existence independent of Him, and that, in its essence, everything is complete divinity. Think only of G'dly matters, and do your best to envelop yourself in Him. Eventually, you will really reach this level of consciousness.

A person who always turns to G'd is a happy human being; his satisfaction is enduring.

3. Correct Your Immediate Problems

Stop indulging in delusions. They are destroying your health and wrecking your nerves. Instead, begin to live with your reality, as it is.

Work to correct your immediate problems. Leave tomorrow alone - it is beyond your grasp. As for people whom you imagine may do you harm - if they aren't bothering you at present, don't embitter yourself with obsessive thoughts about them.

Limit yourself to dealing only with the present time, the present place, and the people you are now involved with.

Don't upset yourself worrying about yesterday, about tomorrow, or about anything else. When a delusion enters your mind, recognize it as such and dismiss it. In this way, you will begin to live with reality. And once you do that, it will be easy for you to deal with all, types of challenges which you previously couldn't manage. You will feel in

charge, powerful, and calm - you will have achieved personal freedom.

4. Free From Worries

If you are suffering, whether spiritually or materially, it is because you have not formulated the proper attitude to deal with your problems. You are hampered by ineffective, unrealistic thinking. Perhaps you invest your energies in reliving the past, imagining how you should have acted; perhaps you are focused on imagining how people around you are trying to harm you; or perhaps due to not having realistically analyzed your problems you tell yourself that your situation is hopeless.

All these styles of thought are delusions, and they are destroying you. How can you free yourself of their toxic influence? By focusing your mind on the essential truth of this universe: that there is a G'd; that there is no existence independent of

Him; that everything is, in its essence, complete divinity; and that nothing in this world - no matter how large and no matter how small occurs beyond G'd's supervision.

When your mind is filled with these concepts, you will have freed yourself of your poisonous delusions. You will be free of your obsessive worries about what other people can do to you, or what may happen to you. Everything, you will see, comes solely from G'd. Nothing and no one will intimidate you. You will realize that in all your circumstances your life is supervised by G'd, and that whatever happens is in accordance with His Will.

5. The Root of Most Suffering

A person can suffer so much from his own state of mind, from the actions of people around him, or from arguments with others. Be aware, my dear fellow-Jew, that the root of most of this

suffering is delusion. A person can make a mental cat-o'-nine-tails with which to whip himself. He may imagine that someone else is acting against him maliciously; he may weave entire tapestries of fantasy. Then, on the basis of these thoughts which he created and which he now believes to describe reality, he gets into fights with others or torments himself. But it is all for nothing; it all stems from delusion.

Surely you wish to lead a good life, a pleasant and a sweet life. Surely you wish to have good relations with the people around you. So recognize your fantasies as the inaccurate portrayals of reality that they are, and throw them away. Look only to G'd. He is the true reality, and there is no reality independent of Him. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe, and everything is under His control.

6. Succeed Both Physically and Spiritually

A person's delusions destroy his life, both physically and spiritually. This is especially true when a person imagines that other people are acting against him; then his thoughts destroy his health and eradicate his peace of mind.

A person suffering from unrealistic modes of perception imagines that other people are acting against him. He repeats these thoughts over and over until he is convinced of it. Then he is possessed by his fantasy; his nerves are frazzled, he cannot relax, and he eats himself alive. He doesn't have the peace of mind to discipline his thoughts and maintain a healthy, spiritual regimen of learning Torah, praying to G'd, and carrying out G'd's commandments joyfully. Instead, he is ruled by fear and rendered incapable by tension. He is moody and angry, and he indulges in bitter fantasies of how he will revenge himself.

Oh, but this is all delusion! The people he is so worked up about may not have had any intention to hurt him; they may hardly be aware of him. And all the negative thoughts, the nerves, and the fantasies are baseless.

Come to terms with what your situation really is. Do not drown in your own delusions.

Instead, think of G'd; cling to Him. Speak to Him simply and without ceremony, just as you would speak to your best friend. Trust that G'd won't abandon you. The Torah says that "a person who trusts in G'd is surrounded with love." When you act this way, you will succeed both physically and spiritually.

7. The Imaginative Faculties

The imaginative faculties - imagining, daydreaming, and the like - are the most primitive function of thought. And your thought is

connected with your soul, which is, in turn, connected with G'd.

If you clarify and purify your imaginative faculties, you can open yourself up to your soul - which is in communication with G'd - to such a degree that you can achieve a prophetic state. G'd says, "I will be imagined by the prophets" (Hosea 12).

In order to achieve this, you must constantly imagine the truth of G'd's existence: that everything is, in its essence, complete divinity; that there is no existence independent of Him; and that everything which occurs is under His supervision.

Accustom yourself to think such thoughts. At first, it will not be a real comprehension, but just your imagination. But if you persist, you will ultimately experience heavenly sights. You will cling to G'd, Who is the Source of life; you will bring about mystic unions which will unite the spiritual universes; you will draw down to yourself the

revelation of G'd's being; you will comprehend things beyond the grasp of others.

But what if, instead, you channel your imaginative faculties into the pursuit of delusions? What if you invest your imagination in images of how other people are trying to hurt you and exploit you? Or worse, what if you focus your imaginative faculties on sexual fantasies or on arguments against G'd's existence? Then you will fall deeper and deeper into the pit which you yourself dug, and you will crash on the bottom like a shattered bottle.

Extricate yourself from your delusions and leave them behind you. Don't concentrate on the things of this world - whether they be sexual thoughts, materialistic thoughts, or thoughts about other people. Instead, practice thinking about G'd. Then you will have channeled your imagination into the service of holiness.

Always think and imagine to yourself that there is no existence independent of G'd; that everything

is, in its essence, complete divinity. Imagine that the world is bathed in G'd's light, and that you yourself are bathed in that light.

The more you channel your thoughts and imaginative faculties into this direction, the more will you purify yourself. At a certain stage, you will be so surrounded by G'd's light that unclean and unhelpful imaginings of sexuality, of non-belief, or of others - will disintegrate.

Even though these imaginings may have been placed deep within your psyche in your childhood days, they will dissolve away; you will be freed of them.

You will then rise to high, exalted levels. But you must be very strong. Don't let your past experiences and defeats discourage you. Even if you have stumbled and sullied yourself before, when you now channel your imaginative faculties in the service of holiness, those powerful faculties will liberate you.

Fortunate is the person who channels his imaginative faculties into holiness, and images that everything is, in its essence, complete divinity.

8. Give yourself over to G'd

Become aware that the source of most of your suffering is your own delusory thinking.

Perhaps you are certain that others are plotting against you; yet really, you are convinced by a fantasy you have yourself concocted. In a vicious circle, your fantasies pain you, and your pain drives you to take refuge in yet more fantasies.

This can destroy your mental and emotional wellbeing. Such fantasizing is a disease. And sometimes these delusions can cause more suffering than an acute physical illness.

A person's fantasies can completely incapacitate him. His whole life becomes subservient to his

anxiety voking, sickness-making, paranoid fantasies. The more he falls under the sway of these delusions, the more bewildered and helpless does he become, and the more does he hann both himself and those around him his family and friends. He weaves the people in his life into the nightmarish tapestry of his self-hating and otherhating delusions, and then he strikes out at them.

And the source of all this pain is substanceless fantasy.

Instead, believe in G'd. Give yourself over to Him. Be aware that there is no existence independent of Him, and that everything is, in its essence, complete divinity. Then you will not victimize yourself with fantasies. Instead, you will cling to G'd and delight in the sweet light of His presence.

9. No One But G'd Really Understands

Delusional thinking can destroy a person. Most of a person's suffering - whether in physical or mental areas is due to wrong, unreliable perceptions. He imagines that other people hate him and are trying to harm him or other such reality-distorting thoughts. Ultimately, this can wreck his life.

Do not be a victim of delusory thinking. Don't even think about other people. Instead, cling to G'd. Realize that no one but G'd really understands you. And realize as well that without G'd's permission, no one can do anything to you.

Why should you dream up unwarranted descriptions of the world which have no connection with reality and which only cause you suffering?

Instead, cling to G'd. Accustom yourself to speak with Him. This will free you of patterns of delusory thinking, and bring you to reality. You

will see that there is no existence independent of G'd; that He supervises every detail of existence; and that no one can do anything to you without His permission.

10. The Only Way to Escape Problems

Be aware that there is no reality independent of G'd. Everything is, in its essence, complete divinity.

Extricate yourself from delusory thinking, and begin to live with reality. Throughout your day, maintain an awareness of G'd; in so doing, you will connect the occurrences in your life to G'd. By clinging to G'd in your thoughts and imagination, you will draw to yourself the spirit and life of His divinity.

Everyone in this world has problems. The only way to escape problems is to run to G'd. Accustom yourself to speak to Him the same way

you would speak to your best friend or to a loving parent. In this way, you will extricate yourself from delusory thinking, and square yourself with reality. You will realize that everything is under G'd's supervision and that whatever you are going through is in accordance with G'd's will, for His own hidden reasons.

The only way you can escape your problems is by praying constantly - day after day and year after year. Nothing can achieve as much as prayer can.

11. The Source of Delusions

Sometimes a person may entertain atheistic thoughts; other times he may think that G'd, being so great, wants to have nothing to do with him.

Be aware, my dear fellow-Jew, that such thoughts indicate that this person has committed many

wrong acts which have damaged his psyche, and which he has not yet dealt with adequately.

When a person does a wrong act, he creates a destructive impression in his mind - a delusion. Then this delusion tears him apart.

Therefore, a person who has acted wrongly must be especially strong. He must turn to G'd wholeheartedly. Then, all of the delusional impressions left by his wrong acts will dissolve. He will no longer be subject to feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness, or beliefs that G'd doesn't want him, or that he will never get out of the mess he's in.

12. A Life Consonant With Reality

Be aware that G'd is a compassionate Father who wants to help us. Usually, when a person drifts away from G'd it is because he is influenced by delusions such as that G'd is angry at him, or that

he will never be able to return to G'd. These fantasies are caused by one's bad actions.

Drag yourself out of the swamp of illusion. Begin to live a life consonant with reality. That is, realize that G'd's glory fills the world; that He maintains all reality; and that everything - be it mineral, plant, animal, or human - is, in its essence, complete G'dliness.

G'd's essence is hidden in all the things of this world. They are, in a manner of speaking, G'd's garments. These "garments" serve to hold back His light so that it descends to us in a measured amount which we are able to receive safely. The fact that G'd's light is hidden from us to such an extent allows for the existence of free will and tribulations.

All of these "garments" constitute the world as we perceive it. The world is a reality in which G'd is hiding Himself. When a person sins, he falls under the sway of the physical. Then he believes that this world constitutes reality in itself,

independent of G'd. This person has fallen victim to illusion. He may now go from one delusion to the next - until, ultimately, he may imagine that he has lost all hope; that he will never be able to escape the conditions his wrong acts have brought him to; and that his life is purposeless and useless.

These are all delusions to which his unreined spirit has carried him.

Really, G'd is our compassionate Father, and He wants to treat us well. He loves us, His creatures, and He waits throughout our lives for us to return to Him. The moment a person relates to G'd, G'd receives him.

Pull yourself up from the mire of fantasy. Draw yourself to G'd's essence and life-force, which is concealed in all the things of this universe. Then you will apprehend reality.

13. 180-Degree Turn For The Better

The cause of most diseases is psychological. A person's thoughts can affect his body and cause him pain and sickness.

Extricate yourself from delusions, and acknowledge reality. Then your life, both physical and spiritual, will make a 180-degree turn for the better. And what is an acknowledgement of reality? It is the realization that G'd maintains the universe; and that, therefore, we are in His hands and only He can help us. These thoughts will transform your consciousness and emotions.

Most of a person's delusions are a result of fear the fear of what other people can do to him. These fears can cause him to suffer depression, anxiety, and lack of self-esteem, and can also wreck his physical well-being.

Instead, become aware of G'd's essence and life force. Realize that He maintains all of reality,

and that He supervises every detail in the universe.

Then you won't be afraid of anyone. You will have attained a liberated consciousness, and everything you encounter will be transformed to goodness.

14. In G'd's Hands

Free yourself of delusions. Stop believing that your situation is hopeless, that you will never succeed, and so forth and so on.

You are in G'd's hands, and not under the control of people. G'd can help you totally transform yourself.

The best technique for achieving such results is to speak to Him in your own words. This will clear away your unrealistic modes of thought like nothing else can. A person's negative thoughts are a consequence of his wrong actions. They

cling to him and convince him that his situation is hopeless and will never change.

But when you speak to G'd, you peel away these delusions, and cling to G'd instead.

This is because every word that a person speaks to G'd draws down a great spiritual light.

Fortunate is the person who doesn't let the matters of this world turn him aside from speaking to G'd. Then he will shed his delusions.

15. Elements of Divine Spirituality

Free yourself of delusion. In every occurrence, look only at the hidden element of divine spirituality that gives it existence. Then your consciousness will be transformed, and the quality of your life unutterably altered.

Then you will always succeed. This is because the cause of a person's failure is his subjugation to his

delusions and negative thoughts, which eat away at him relentlessly.

He always imagines that people are taking away what belongs to him or are trying to gain the upper hand over him. This can cripple a person with panic and anxiety.

But fear of other people is no more than delusion. G'd is the only reality, and everything is, in its essence, complete divinity.

No one can take away from you anything which G'd means for you to have.

So why live in fear? Instead, trust in G'd. Train yourself to perceive the spiritual divinity in everything you see. Your consciousness will completely change, and you will begin to lead a good and confident life.

When a person frees himself of delusions, his life changes for the better. He isn't afraid of anyone, because he knows that everything is in G'd's power.

Fortunate is the person who turns his thoughts to G'd; who knows clearly that there is no reality independent of Him; who liberates himself from delusions; and who is filled with faith in G'd. His lot in both this world and in the future, eternal world, is enviable.

16. A Life In Tune With Reality

Always try to bring yourself close to G'd. Fill your life with trust in Him - be aware that He supervises every detail of your affairs.

The more you achieve this consciousness, the more will you escape the power of delusions.

Delusions can destroy a person. His thoughts may become so tainted with fantasies that his life is more bitter than death. He grows afraid of everyone. He thinks that everyone wants to hurt him and cheat him.

These self-destructive beliefs are a result of a lack of faith in G'd. A person must attain a lucid faith. Otherwise, he is steeped in pernicious fantasies, and is a victim of his own fears and suspicions, which rob his life of happiness and meaning.

Train yourself to attain a simple faith in G'd. Bear in mind that G'd maintains and gives life to the entire universe. Nothing - no matter how large and no matter how small - occurs outside His supervision.

When you internalize these concepts, you will perceive the world around you freshly. You will no longer be -a victim of delusions.

Instead, you will live a life in tune with reality.

Then your life on this earth will be a good one. More than that, your eternal life in the world-to-come will be sweet beyond imagination.

As a result of your faith in G'd, you will achieve the level of clinging to G'd forever, Amen.

A Prayer to Attain Freedom from Delusions

My Father in heaven, have pity on me.

I have fallen, and I have been lost in the depths for so many years.

My mind is constantly filled with delusions, selfdestructive thoughts, and ugly fantasies. I find it so hard to free myself of them. They have become so much a part of me that I wvn afraid of everyone I meet, as though everyone has the power to hurt or cheat me. I spend entire days and nights swwnped by these delusions, repeating them over and over again.

Meanwhile, I don't think at all about You, about my pwpose in this world, and about what will happen to me after I leave this world and I have to give an account of myself to You.

So I am turning to You now, G'd, the Father of Abrahwn, Isaac, and Jacob, the G'd of all our great and holy leaders.

Have compassion on me. Help me climb out of this deep pit in which I'm stuck. Help me begin to see reality - to know that You are the only reality, and that everything in this world is just a garment in which You hide Yourself.

Then help me purify my imagination until Your infinite light will shine on me, so that I am no longer afraid of anyone. Help me fill my life with goodness, vitality, and joy. Help me really be a free person.

Help me be calm and clear in all my actions and words. Help me not get upset by anything.

May it be so, now and forever, Amen.

RABBI NACHMAN'S SAYINGS

Gevald!!! Never give up hope.

It is forbidden for one to give up hope.

Hisbodedus (meditation) is a very high level. in fact it is above all other levels.

If you believe that you can destroy, believe that you can rectify.

Know, that a person walks in life on a very narrow bridge. The most important rule is not to be afraid.

Even when things appear to be at their worst, it can instantly turn around for the best.

A person for the pleasure of a quarter of an hour can lose his portion in this world as well as in the World to Come.

When asked, "What is in reality the power of choice?" the Rebbe answered, "Simple. If you want, you do, if not, not. Too many people are trapped in the customs of their habits, but if they truly want to, they can easily overcome.

Although the Land of Israel appears to be as ordinary as any other land, nevertheless, it is very great and awesome in its holiness. The same is true of a righteous man. He appears as others do,

yet his inner being is completely holy and different from the average man.

Concerning wars that take place between nations, Rabbi Nachman remarked, "See how wise and intelligent these people are, constantly thinking and planning to invent the ultimate weapon that can in one moment wipe out thousands upon thousands of people".

Faith may be on the lowest level, but only through faith one can attain the highest of all levels.

The main mitzvah that is entitled "doing" is the act of charity.

A student was once complaining to Rabbi Nachman about his lack of accomplishment in serving G'd. He said that he wanted very much to serve G'd. Rabbi Nachman said to him "Do you truly want to desire?"

One must always look for the good points in every single Jew.

Peace comes when there is truth. Peace is the sign of life.

Our holy Breslover Yeshiva situated in Brooklyn, whose branches are spread throughout the Holy Land, in such places as Jerusalem, Bnei Brak, Zefat, and Ashdod, has now undertaken the construction of [Yavneel's Breslov city](#). A new Bais Hamedrash already stands, housing a Kollel, Talmud Torah and Mikvah. Many more subsequent buildings are in the midst of erection which will provide homes for many Kollel families, a Yeshiva Gedola, and a Girl's School. Likewise, the blueprint for the great synagogue is already complete, which in the terms of the architects, will be "the Light of the Galilee". It will be a magnificent structure, including a tremendous Shule and an ultra-modern wedding hall which will be available free of charge to any needy family or chosson and kallah. The construction is

due to commence in the coming months, please G'd, and to be completed in the coming year.

At the same time we continue to publish and spread the holy teachings of Rabbi Nachman throughout the world in many languages, and if you would like to have a share in our holy work, your generous donation would be greatly appreciated.

All contributions are tax deductible and can be mailed to.

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