

The Divine Conversation

Based on the Teachings of
Rabbi Nachman of Breslov
and His Holy Disciples

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THE DIVINE CONVERSATION

Sweet words of faith, encouragement,
and inspiration for
everyone -- with the hope
and purpose that they be worthy of
coming close to G'd and of attaining
eternal perfection in this
passing world. Words which
will help them bask in the ecstatic
warmth and pleasure of G'd's
Divine Presence. Along with
teachings on how to speak
with G'd in total innocence.

Based on the teachings
of the Holy Rebbe, the Tzadik,
Foundation of the World, the Hidden Light . . .

RABBI NACHMAN OF BRESLOV, ZY" E

... And on the teachings
of his Holy Disciple, the Genius
and Incredible Light to whom no secret
remained hidden ...

RABBI NOSAN OF BRESLOV, ZY"E

1. Speaking With G'd

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov of sainted memory often extolled the virtues of conversing with G'd. He explained it to be such a tremendous practice, that with it, anyone could reach the highest realms imaginable. The Rebbe spoke with the utmost seriousness and instructed his disciples in the ways of this divine work, telling us to set aside at least an hour a day in which to be alone with the Almighty to speak

with Him. He emphasized the greatness of the forests and fields, as well as all other places free of mans' influence and presence. However, a small. I quiet room can bring you to the same intimacy with the Creator.

Spark up a conversation with G'd and get really involved. Speak to Him with words of grace and yearning. Share the details of your life with Him. Beg G'd to let you soon be worthy of coming closer to Him. Have this little talk in your own familiar way. Do not worry about speaking in Hebrew or in Yiddish -- you would just not be at ease. G'd understands English also, even though He does have a special love for Hebrew. Your own particular way of talking will soon inspire you, drawing your heart right into the matter at hand. Share your whole heart with G'd, whether you happen to be thinking thoughts of regret and remorse over the past, or aspirations of coming close to Him from now on.

Have his conversation with G'd each and every day. Be strong! Dedicate a specific time for it and stick to it without fall. Pour out your heart before Him like a flowing fountain. He hears every word and will most certainly rescue you from your plight. The rest of the time though, you should try the utmost to just be bright and cheerful.

This is really the ultimate way of serving G'd and of coming close to Him. It is the most fulfilling path ever conceived of, and it by far surpasses all else, for no matter how distant a person feels he might be from the Creator, a short little chat and he will feel totally different.

Talk with G'd for as long a stretch as you desire. Share your moments of joy with Him, and those of sadness as well. G'd is your very best friend. Confess your feelings of regret to Him. Then pray for mercy and renew your desire to be a good Jew.

If you cannot seem to find words to begin a conversation, do not let even this upset you. The mere fact that you desire to have this holy talk is in itself a tremendous accomplishment, and it brings G'd great pleasure.

In fact, one's frustrated attempts at conversing with G'd can themselves be a topic for discussion. Ask G'd to help you talk with Him! Explain to Him that you have so much you want to share with Him, yet you do not know where to begin. Don't be shy, you can even beg Him. Bring yourself to tears over this to help convince G'd to come to your rescue. "Master of the World, I am so terribly far from You, why I can hardly open my lips before You. Show mercy upon such a distraught soul, that I might at least talk with You."

Know my friend, that there are a countless number of very famous tzadikim, (the righteous), who have all proudly confessed

that their admittance to the higher realms came about solely because of their constant conversations with G'd.

A person of intelligence can easily comprehend the tremendous attributes of this practice. The path is the same for the greatest as well as for the most insignificant of people. Any person can come to scale breath-taking heights of holiness and intimacy with G'd by way of this amazing path. Happy are all of these people and how delightful their portions. [See Likutei Morahon II; 25.]

2. The Palace Gates

Rabbi Nachman once mentioned to me, (Rabbi Nosan), that whether the greatest person or the lowliest, it is impossible to be truly righteous unless one talks with G'd. He mentioned many well known tzadikim and

declared that every one of them came to their tremendous spiritual levels solely by means of their "Divine Conversations." [Likutei Morahon II; 100]

The Rebbe remarked; "Of course righteous people can be found who don't speak with G'd, but I call such folk confused and disoriented." [Rabbi Nachinan's Wisdom 228]

The greatest realization a person can attain, is one where he truly sees the need of having total, abandoned faith in G'd and in the "Laws of Holiness." [The Torah and Commandments] If he then takes this to heart, he will come to enjoy life in childlike innocence and simplicity a life free of status-seeking games and deceitful pursuits.

Let the Truth of G'd's ever present Existence penetrate your entire being. Comprehend without a shadow of a doubt that nothing whatsoever exists other than G'd Himself Everything in the entire universe are all part

of G'd's very own Self -- whether human, animal, plant or mineral. This is even more obvious for everything existing in the spiritual realms.

In the language of Kabbalah, this realization of G'd is called the Kingdom [Malchus], for by acknowledging G'd's all encompassing Presence, a person draws down the blissful "yoke" of G'd's Rulership upon himself as well as upon the entire world.

This is so significant that it has relevance for every situation imaginable, and the first step in any undertaking is to acknowledge this Greatest Truth -- for it involves within it absolutely everything imaginable. After recognizing this Divine Truth, you can then continue on, by reaching higher and higher towards whatever goal you are pursuing, and ascend through each of the other Divine Traits [Sefirot] until you are brought even to G'd's glorious Crown. [Ceter]

G'd's Crown is an expression of His Will and Desire, submerged within the light of His Infinite Presence. The Crown is often compared with the Ancient of Days [Atik Yomin] -- the comprehension of G'd as a "wide elder," existing far above the mundane realm of time and space.

If a person has a true desire to completely unite with G'd, then he will eventually be found worthy of the holy Crown. Perceiving the world with the Crown will cause one to quickly dismiss the pursuits of this realm as vain and childish. Such is the greatness of this vision and understanding, and it is worth more than all the treasures on earth.

Yet even upon reaching this level, a person must continue on by setting still higher goals for himself. There are yet finer, more ecstatic levels to be sought, and the steps leading from the Kingdom up to the Crown continue on upward, unfolding in even more sublime realms.

The Crown is only revealed when a person has a true yearning for G'd. What remains untold though, is that there are many different degrees of true yearning, and these different grades correspond with the four spiritual realms. [Explained more thoroughly later on]

Despite its awesome glory and magnificence, the Crown as seen from the World of Action [The four worlds are explained later on. In Hebrew they are: (1) Atzilut (2) Briah (3) Yetzirah (4) Asiyah] is far less revealing than merely entering the Kingdom on the next plane -- the World of Forms. [Olam Shel Yetzirah]

In other words, if you constantly renew your search for G'd. even when you are totally satisfied by your present understanding of Him, then you will come to an even greater awareness of Him. Renew the search by entering His Kingdom even further than before. Acknowledge G'd with greater feeling. Remind and inspire yourself that G'd is the

Creator of everything, and our King for all eternity. Re-accept the yoke of His dominion upon yourself with more simplicity than ever before -- and this is most important of all.

The Kingdom as revealed in this next realm -- the World of Forms, is the very source of the Crown as perceived in the World of Action where we began the trek upward.

This in fact reveals that the ultimate way to come nearer to G'd is through simplicity -- the spirit which reigns in His Kingdom. This is yet more significant with regard to the higher worlds of Creation [Olam Shel Bria] and Emanation [Olam Shel Atzilut] -- realms where G'd's Presence is even more revealed.

Yet, even with pure simplicity, very little of this can be achieved if you are not filled with a burning desire to even see G'd" -- a desire and will beyond desire. You must have a longing and waxing for even a single moment with G'd. Leave no room for doubt, because

this experience of being near to G'd is so fantastic, that it is more than worth the effort.

"My soul thirsts for You, my flesh pines for You . . . " [Psalms 63:2] "My flesh and my heart fall, but G'd is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." [Psalms 76:26] "My soul yearns and even pines for the courts of G'd; my heart and flesh sing with joy unto the living G'd." [Psalms 84:3] These are all examples of how King David praised G'd throughout his life.

-- And this is how he prayed: "One thing have I asked of G'd, this will I seek after -- that I may dwell in the house of G'd all the days of my life, to behold the graciousness of G'd, and to visit early in His Temple." [Psalms 27:4]

All of these strivings reflect the awesome attachment to G'd a person can attain by wearing tefillin, (phylacteries), [It is a commandment in the Torah for men of thirteen years and older to bind tefillin upon

themselves throughout their lives. These specially constructed black leather boxes contain several hand written parchments of certain sections of the Torah] as revealed in the following passages: "... but all of you that did cleave to the L'rd your G'd are alive, every one of you, this day." [Deuteronomy 4:4] "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm -- for love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire -- the very flame of G'd. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." [Song of Songs 8:6-7] All of these espousals were said in praise of this precious commandment of tefillin. Happy are all those who know such intimate closeness to G'd.

The climb continues, onward and upward, to greater and greater heights of unity with G'd's Divine Presence -- forever and ever.

Actually, it was this very search which motivated our souls to take on the

"garments" of this physical world in the first place. Here we can actually know G'd more intimately than ever before -- with taste and touch and the other senses, as well as with the whole host of wonderful gifts with which G'd has blessed us.

Yet even here there is no end to the search -- for "His Greatness is unsearchable." [Psalms 145:3]

3. Kabbalistic Engineering

Journeying into the mysteries of faith a little deeper, we first encounter the Ten Divine Traits [Sefirot]: Crown; Wisdom; Understanding; Kindness; Strength; Beauty; Victory; Splendor; Foundation and Kingdom. These ten Traits correspond to the ten sayings through which the world was created, and their significance is quite awesome indeed -- revealing G'd's very own

"Personality." This all points directly to our own task in life -- to emulate G'd, and to become worthy of having been created in His Image.

The highest of the ten is the Crown [Ceter] -- the first of the three intellectual Traits, which expresses G'd's innermost Will and Desire. It remains in a realm above, in perfect harmony with G'd's Essence. To ascend to this high place, you must constantly speak with G'd, and yearn incessantly to be brought here. Let your entire being unite under G'd's Will and Purpose in this realm of consciousness high above the limits of time.

Next comes Wisdom. [Chochmah] Attach your mind to G'dliness and strive for a clear, deep comprehension of the truth. Wisdom is very "other-worldly" also, and often requires a lot of conversation with G'd to ascend to, as well as much contemplation.

The third of the traits is Understanding, [Binah] a more diverse sort of outlook. Develop your ideas and thoughts. Bring them down. Understand their significance through the many faces of perception. Expand your share of G'dliness and insight to all reaches of life.

Kindness [Binah] is the first of the emotional traits. Fortunately for us, G'd's foremost method of running the world is with unlimited grace. Use a generous portion of this pure, untempered kindness in all of your dealings too. Think this way, and realize our true unworthiness for any of the Divine Favor which is ours to enjoy.

Strength [Geverah] is next. Sometimes the ways of holiness require great struggling to attain to -- for G'd may reveal Himself in a rebuking manner. Something which is tolled for will be that much more appreciated though, and this is a moral which reveals the greatness of this trait. So be strong, especially

when G'd is revealing Himself in such a fashion.

Beauty [Tiferes] is to have the proper balance, always weighing between these last two paths. Stay warm and friendly as you surge on toward the new, but remember to be strong and forceful toward any distractions and obstacles -- a juggling act of opposites.

Eternal Victory [Netzach] is the trait which leads beyond time. The laws of the Torah will liberate your soul, since G'd Created them forever. Always look for endurance, because permanence means truth, as well as the enslavement of evil and time.

Splendor [Hod] shines forth for all to behold. G'd's glory and wealth radiate to every inch of creation. This is the trait of Aaron the Priest. Seek the glory and majesty to sanctify G'd through them for these are the tools of

divine service -- a way for us to express our overwhelming awe of G'd.

The Foundation [Yesod] of serving G'd is purity. This is the pillar upon which everything rests, as it is written: "Tzadik, (righteous purity) -- the foundation of the world." [Proverbs 10:25] Gain purity by separating yourself from the physical world and its temporary pleasures -- the task which includes all others.

When G'd rules over man and reigns far and wide, then the Kingdom [Malchus] is complete. Trust in G'd's ways in pure, simple faith. For just knowing He exists is the greatest blessing there is.

When accepting the Torah, if you get caught in a struggle and cannot see the light, then strengthen your faith in the King. For instance, if something is within the realm of your comprehension, you do not really require faith to realize its truth. However,

when the meaning is beyond your grasp, then cling tightly to your faith in G'd, for the test has begun!

If you merit to strengthen your faith and place your entire trust in G'd and in the teachings of our sages, then the weaknesses of your previous outlook will soon become apparent to you. After fulfilling the laws at hand with naive trust and faith, you will eventually come to thoroughly understand them as well.

The Laws of the Torah were given in the realm of eternity, so they will always have significance. Of course, many of the Commandments such as the prohibitions against murder and theft have reasons apparent to everyone. Yet, even Laws such as those to keep the Shabbos and the festivals, and those imposing limits on sexual relations are all brimming with the deepest meanings imaginable.

Some of the Torah's Commandments are so mysterious though, that they can only be understood by following their dictates in total faith. Their divine relevance will shine through eventually though, and enlighten the very core of your being.

Yet all the gratitude is due to your initial faith to fulfill the Commandments blindly, even at the expense of appearing foolish.

If people had even stronger faith though, they would have the confidence to accept all of the Commandments without any struggles, since the entire Torah is built around pure, innocent faith.

There are certain Laws which are so spiritual, that they are utterly impossible to understand logically. These Commandments demand a person to simply increase his innocent faith in G'd and in the Torah; and then even these Laws and Ordinances will shed their dark, impenetrable natures.

There will always be that realm beyond one's reach, but it must be tackled with the same tools of faith also. So it goes from one level to the next, higher and higher, through all the wondrous reaches of G'd's Kingdom, all with the power of simple faith.

A person can have perfect faith in G'd, irrelevant of where he is, because G'd's Kingdom exists absolutely everywhere, and since faith corresponds with the Kingdom, it too is always there for a person to enter.

Once you enter the Kingdom, you can then ascend this mystical ladder from wherever you are, right up through all of the Ten Divine Traits. If you have enough prayer and yearning, you can even ascend through all of the four spiritual universes. From these breathtaking realms, the furthest reaches and depths of the entire creation will be within your vision. Yet, even so, you should still revere simple faith above all else, for it will

be the starting point of even greater achievements.

Faith has many grades, and the stronger a person's faith, the easier it will be for him to subdue the evil in a test of his loyalty. To remain loyal to G'd is not always a small feat, and if a person is victorious in such a trial, he will be able to soar higher and higher -- to even the highest crown.

Of course, this is the last thing the Satan enjoys, so you can imagine that he will throw every sort of obstacle in your way that he possibly can. Victory may even take years and years, depending on the person's deeds and merits. Yet, this is only fair. No one can expect to wipe away all the obstacles from his path in one fell swoop -- especially if his past deeds have not been of the sort to inspire G'd's help.

When a persistent seeker is finally found worthy of reaching the crown of his present

level, he will also be worthy of experiencing G'd's pure Will and Desire, which are the source of the holy crown.

G'd's Will is overwhelming. It is comparable with the Ancient of Days -- a region far above the mundane realm of space and time. Inspired on by the tremendous experience of having shared G'd's very own Desires, a person can easily continue the climb upward by drawing an even greater amount of faith upon himself. This alone will lift him through higher and higher levels and through countless universes of G'd's Infinite Presence.

. . . Higher and higher, from the World of Action to the World of Forms. Then even higher, to the World of Creation, and finally to the World of Pure Emanation. The task of mastering the Ten Attributes in each of these worlds describes man's entire goal and purpose in life -- to bring an awareness of G'd to even the farthest reaches of consciousness.

Starting at the World of Action, otherwise known as this physical realm of time and space, enter G'd's Kingdom by declaring your faith in Him. Ascend through all of the Divine Traits by praying for G'd's help, and after uniting with the Crown, gather encouragement and strength, and journey onward from the World of Action up to the World of Forms.

This is the domain of the angels -- G'd's pure spiritual creations, always fulfilling His will. [Sharei Kedusah; Chclek 3, Shar 2] Start by confirming that these too, are the work of the One Creator, and must therefore also be real. Accept and acknowledge this intangible world with yet stronger attachment, until, Just as before, you perceive its very Crown.

Ascend further, into the World of Creation, first Kingdom and Foundation, and then finally acquire Wisdom and even the Crown. This is the World of G'd's Throne" [Olam

HaKisei] -- where His bright Truth is revealed for all to behold.

The highest of these worlds is that of Emanation. Here, G'd's Infinite Essence shines forth with the brightest light imaginable -- since this world is the very core of existence. Virgin concepts and feelings are uninhibited of all structure and form, yet filled with incredible life -- exploding with the Essence of All.

When a person is worthy of making these conquests, he will come, at least in the end, to pure, simple faith, and esteem it far above all else. You see, even the furthest reaches of knowledge reveal that virtually nothing is known by man, and that simple faith is the heart of belief. Granted, faith is less profound than great wisdom, but it is greater in other ways. It is useless to attempt an understanding of the world one is in without first accepting on faith that G'd rules over all.

And so, my friend, if you are put to a trial by G'd and by Torah, due to your nagging questions and doubts; then put all logic aside, and strengthen your faith. Soon you will see that G'd's Torah is perfect -- the very epitomy of truth, and faith will come easily, helping you in your pursuit of G'd's shining light and true glory.

4. Prayer and Yearning -- The Magic Fuel

The accomplishments which a person must strive for in this world all reveal the greatness of faith. Each step that a person ascends in the climb toward holiness reveals G'd's Infinite Presence more and more. You can come to the point of being completely absorbed within G'd's Presence -- constantly surging on higher and higher without bounds.

The greatness of faith is revealed most though, at the time of prayer, as the two are so intimately bound together. This is what the verse in Exodus reveals: ". . . and his (Moses') hands were faith." [Exodus 17:12] The Targum, a divinely inspired translation, explains that "his hands were spread forth in prayer." The commentator Rashi explains: "Behold, Moses' hands were raised to heaven -- his prayers expressed in such wondrous faith and perfection." Look into this episode of the Torah well, and you will find amazing wonders.

If people would really understand that "the whole world is filled with His Glory," [Isaiah 6:3] and that G'd is really standing nearby a person who prays, carefully considering the longings of his heart, then everyone would certainly pray with the utmost longing and desire, and take exceptional care to think carefully before uttering even a single word.

However, since people do not always perceive G'd's Intimate Presence hovering around them while they pray, their prayers and supplications often lack the burning desire to cleave to G'd. Almost every person has his own foolishness and blindness blocking the way to true prayer, and they therefore suffer from emptiness and misplaced emotions and feelings in some way. [See Likutei Moharon 62]

Always make an accounting during your prayers and conversations with G'd to determine exactly how strong your faith is. The greater your faith in G'd, and the more you enjoy the realization that nothing at all exists besides Him, the higher will your conversations take you. Your constant talks with the Creator will cause your face to glow with the telltale signs of holiness, set ablaze from within your heart.

Start by coming to terms with the fact that G'd is right beside you, and is aware of even

your most intimate thoughts. Then you will soon be able to talk with Him face to face -- just like two friends. The more awareness a person has of G'd, the more he will converse with Him, as he will be more sensitive always surrounding him, ready of G'd's irresistible Presence to "lend an ear."

Actually, this is one of the reasons the Rebbe constantly exhorted his disciples to always speak with G'd. Rabbi Nachman said of himself that the greatest ally he had in his climb to reach whatever tremendous levels he reached, was his ability to live simply. He would talk with G'd about absolutely everything, and say a lot of Psalms as well, all in perfect innocence and whole-hearted devotion. He attributed his entire success to this alone. He once said: "If I had known that G'd would make me into what I now am, (that is, such an extraordinary tzadik), I would have increased my service of G'd to the point that I would have accomplished in a single

day that which took me an entire year to achieve." [Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom 154] (Referring to the service of prayer.)

Therefore, Rabbi Nachman's disciples always work at perfecting their prayers and try to continually talk with G'd with more and more innocence and simplicity each time. We try to never relent of this divine service, even upon achieving tremendous closeness with G'd. The Rebbe taught us to cleave to the Creator no matter how accomplished or no matter how destitute.

Irrelevant of how close a person may already be to the Almighty, he should try to be ever amidst a conversation with Him, lest he take a wrong turn in the ever changing paths of holiness and go astray.

When someone wants to return to G'd -- his heart ablaze with desire, or even if he merely seeks to draw somewhat closer to Him, he must be prepared to endure whatever his lot

may be. This applies for the righteous who have already ascended through countless awe-filled worlds, as well as for the most shameless of sinners, now on the road back up.

The trials and tribulations of proving oneself loyal sometimes include thousands and even myriads of "ups and downs." Those on the path must have tremendous faith in G'd. They are often tossed about, one moment experiencing eternity within G'd's "bliss-laden chambers" high above, and the next, left seemingly without a hope in the entire world.

Therefore, such divinely inspired seekers must constantly renew themselves with greater and greater strength and encouragement not to turn away from serving G'd -- not even due to the most tragic of circumstances, G'd forbid.

All of the possible occurrences in a person's life, both good and bad, all reflect the many battles and pains which the Jewish nation has actually endured from its very inception. Yet, somehow, G'd will bring us to the final redemption, where we will all rejoice within His Kingdom, free of all pain and suffering -- as individual people, as a nation, and as an entire world.

5. Blood, Sweat, and Tears

Advice of paramount importance in the service of G'd is to constantly give yourself greater and greater encouragement irrelevant of how terribly far you may have already fallen.

You must believe with perfect faith that there is absolutely no reason whatsoever for despair. You can find G'd 'n absolutely any place or situation. If a person falls to the

blazing fires of hell, he must remain strong and not give up hope, for G'd can be found even there.

This itself is the tremendous foundation on which all else revolves, that is, to never give in to feelings of abandon and despair; and this applies even for a person who purposely trampled over countless Divine Laws and Decrees, or who let himself sin in other unthinkable ways. NEVER GIVE UP!

All of the great tzadiklin who ever existed attained their goals here on earth by adhering to this very same pillar, letting it completely rule their lives.

The truth is that almost everyone starts to serve G'd at some time or other during their lives. Some only last a short time within the ranks of service, while others make it for a longer stretch. Yet, only a select few ever come to actually find their places among the pious.

However, such merits are far from being genetic or otherwise influenced. The main edge that these special few have is found in their extraordinary stubbornness and absolute refusal to give up.

The problem is that as people start becoming accustomed to serving G'd, they can easily get lax and fall from their previous levels, by forgetting the constant need to renew themselves. They thereby condemn themselves from ever reaching the supernal realms which await them.

On the other hand, the truly righteous have all managed to get smart and strengthen themselves to never allow anything to pull them away from their divine service. If they happen to weaken, and fall somewhere along the line, they merely continue to strengthen themselves -- even though they might have caused destruction by means of their bad actions. This itself is the most sought after secret which has helped each and every one

of these great men to attain such awesome heights of G'dliness. Yet, the gates remain open for even the most insignificant of men to enter, all that is needed is enough faith and determination.

6. Desire Knows No Bounds

Attaining such a pure level of faith is not exactly the easiest of tasks though, therefore requiring great patience and endurance. Encourage yourself, as King David said: "If I ascend up to heaven, then You are there. If I arrange my bed ill hell, then You are there." [Psalms 139:8] Cleave on to G'd's wondrous Presence no matter where you are -- even if you feel you are a miserable failure, and even if you have fallen to the thick darkness of hell itself, G'd forbid. **DON'T EVER DESPAIR!** Instead, pour out your heart to G'd in prayer from the very depths of your soul.

This is the greatest way to repent of past evils. Through prayer, a person comes back to the "Ways of Life." G'd has tremendous Kindness, and yearns for each and every person to return to Him. G'd Created repentance even before Torah," [Tractate Pesachim 54a] which attests to its very special status.

By turning away from evil, you can change absolutely everything around for the better. Why, even premeditated sins can become merits, as the sages revealed. [Tractate Yoma 86b] And as the Prophet Hosea revealed, the essence of repentance is prayer, for he said: "Take with you words, (prayer), and return to G'd." [Hosea 14:3]

If someone really desires to come back to G'd in perfect penitence, then the path is constant prayer. Beg G'd continuously to help you draw closer and to cleave to Him in the utmost of holiness. Speak with Him as a friend, and let your heart melt before Him,

that He might take pity upon such a distant soul. Ask that He guard you from sin and lust. Ask all of your desires of Him. G'd holds the keys to every treasure there is to be found. Bother and pester Him. Tell G'd about even the most trivial events.

This is essential for everyone, especially repentant sinners, who already fell to tragic depths of which only they themselves know. Keep speaking with G'd, and you will certainly be spared from the grave dangers of this tempting world.

Every day is replete with the Evil Inclination constantly upon mans' heels, anxious to attack. [Tractate Kiddushin 30a] Anyone who attempts to battle becomes marked for yet greater attacks. It seems to be a never ending battle to merely hold your own, let alone to rise to higher levels. It was therefore quite fittingly that the sages warned us: "All who are greater than their peers have a greater Evil Urge." [Tractate Succah 52a] This is quite

obvious from day to day experience, as well. When two people are fighting, and the one realizes that his enemy is gaining the upper hand, he puts up an even greater fight. This vicious cycle arouses the profound question of how one becomes worthy of true repentance. The answer though, is quite simple -- through constant prayer and conversation with G'd in total simplicity. Get into the habit of speaking with G'd every single day. Pour out your heart before Him. Don't be afraid, the L'rd has tremendous mercy. Cry out to Him constantly that you be worthy of true penitence.

Keep us this holy work even if you do not see any results, for the delay is most certainly due to the need of even stronger prayer. just do you part and utter prayer after prayer to the Almighty G'd. He will certainly take pity upon you and have mercy.

"Await the L'rd, be strong; give strength to your heart, and keep awaiting the L'rd."

[Psalms 27:14] The sages explained: "If a person prays and sees that his prayers are not being answered, then he should go back and pray even more -- as it says; 'Await the L'rd, be strong; give strength to your heart, and keep awaiting the L'rd.' [Tractate Berachos 32b] " [Chai Moharon; Avodas HaShem 10]

A person's repentance is not complete until he knows he will remain strong in prayer even after failing a test of his loyalty to G'd. Therefore, if a person is impatient with G'd, being weak in his prayers, it is a sign that he has not yet completely repented.

So you see, even penitence requires great patience and endurance. When a person encourages himself to the point that, should he even fail a test of his sincerity, he would still seek G'd's Help, then he will eventually attain perfection guaranteed! His reward will be an understanding of the very core of

repentance, all thanks to his initial decision to never give up.

This is what Rabbi Nachman said explicitly: "Just as you see me now, (that is, you realize my tremendous level of holliness, and how I am a perfect tzadik), even so if I were to fall right now to commit a terrible sin, believe me, I would not allow myself to despair, not even the slightest amount. I would remain just as great as before, only I would of course repent." [Chai Moharon; Avodas HaShem 10]

7. The Foundation Stone

The first redemption of the Jewish nation (from the Egyptian bondage), took a long time before it was complete. However, the final redemption of Meshlach's coming, once begun, will conclude without any delay whatsoever.

The first redemption is called the redemption of Torah, since it was only after leaving Egypt that we were found worthy of receiving the Torah. The Torah is related to the mind -- as both are in the domain of eternity. The Torah's Laws are perfect. There is no power capable of enslaving the truth, since freedom and truth go hand in hand. Moses, our teacher is also connected with the Torah and the mind, because the Torah was given through him, and he shares its unique perfection.

On the other hand, the final redemption of Meshlach's coming is related to prayer, the service related to the heart. Meshiach's most essential weapon will be prayer. [Likutei Moharon 2] The Holy Temple will be rebuilt due to his holy work -- the Temple being the choicest place of prayer for all. This is what the Prophet Isaiah revealed: for My House shall be called a house of prayer for all people." [Isaiah 56:7]

It was revealed by the sages that our final redemption will have two phases. The long awaited redemption will first bring Meshlach ben Yosef, a descendant of Joseph, who will lead us through the last struggles of the exile.

Meshlach ben Yosef will be followed by Meshlach ben David, a descendant of King David, who will ascend the throne of universal world leadership in eternal peace and happiness. King David was the "sweet singer of Israel," and his prayers were so beautiful that the very concept of prayer is represented by him. just as Moses represents Torah and the mind, so does King David represent prayer and the heart. The Book of Psalms which King David composed is based entirely on his prayers and deep yearning that one be able to return to G'd after even the worst failures imaginable. There is absolutely no way to outsmart the Evil Urge without prayer. Prayer will bring you all sorts of advice and ideas on how to free your soul

from the bitter exile and how to draw nearer to G'd. This is what King David said himself. "In return for my love, they afflict me, but I am all prayer." [Psalms 109:4] In other words, the more King David showed his love for G'd and yearned to come closer to Him, the more opposition he had from the forces of evil. [Tractate Succah 52a]

If so, then how did he actually become worthy of truly cleaving to the Almighty? The answer is revealed by King David at the end of the verse: "... but I am all prayer." [Psalms 109:4] I constantly add to my prayers and beg G'd to take me from my suffering with stronger and stronger yearning. It does not matter how far I may have fallen or how great my affliction, I just keep pouring out my heart to G'd. And this explains why King David is symbolic of prayer, as it is also written: "But as for me, I will forever hope, and praise You yet more and more." [Psalms 71:14]

The whole path of prayer remained incomplete until King David composed the Five Books of Psalms -- a unity of the diverse hopes and yearnings of the entire Jewish nation, corresponding to the Five Books of the Torah -- the diverse Laws of our nation. [Yehi Ratzon after Psalms] As the Five Books of the Torah express all of G'd's Commandments, so do the Five Books of Psalms express the lifelong hopes and yearnings to fulfill the Torah's Commandments.

David devoted his whole life to endless prayer and devotion, and he thereby reached the very heights of the heavens, and it was he who finally located G'd's chosen place for the Temple -- the place of prayer. The Temple's location was completely hidden from the eyes of the world until King David came and pleaded, and fought incredible struggles to learn to its whereabouts. Here is one place where he describes his struggles in search of

the Temple grounds: "G'd, remember for David, all of his afflictions, how he swore unto G'd, and vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob: 'I will surely not enter the shelter of my house, nor go up into the bed that is spread for me. I will not give sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to my eyelids until I search out a place for G'd, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob'." [Psalms 132:1-5]

The place which G'd chose for the Temple's location is it the Foundation Stone" -- the rock from which the entire world was created, symbolizing that the foundation of the world is prayer.

To a person who lacks sincere prayer, the place of G'd remains hidden, and he is forced to wander through life unfulfilled. This is being true even for a person who works hard in Torah. For there have been prized yeshiva students who have come to walk away from the Torah life -- often after years of burning passion for Torah. What happened? Can a

seemingly slight problem like a lack of yearning and prayer cause such terrible tragedies? The answer is yes, and this reply is not surprising, not even concerning great scholars. For instance, many times one is forced out to the "real world" with little or no opportunity to learn Torah. If not to prayer and yearning, what could a person then hold on to? Or, if, G'd forbid, a person happens to lose interest in Torah, then without prayer, he will have absolutely nothing left. If he keeps a strong yearning for G'd though, and prays, he will always have hope -- even if he passes through the most bitter exile and darkness imaginable.

Therefore, you must realize, my precious brother, that the essential foundation of serving G'd is simple, heartfelt prayer. With prayer and a strong yearning for G'd, a person will always have hope -- even if he passes through the most bitter hell

imaginable. True yearning for G'd will bring everything back within your reach.

Sometimes a person falls so far that he has not a single place to stand. His whole sense of belonging and purpose seem utterly empty of meaning and he is overcome by feelings of worthlessness and melancholy. King David saw such suffering and emptiness too. "I'm drowning in the thick mud with no place to stand. I've come to the depths of the waters, and the currents are threatening. " [Psalms 69:3]

The pity for such lost souls is horrendous. On the one hand, these souls realize their suffering and long to get on to the straight path. But on the other hand, they feel far from holiness, and worse, that they are sinking even further with each new day -- so they are ashamed to ask for help.

G'd is so great though, that He will descend to the most tragic depths to help His distraught

children. There is no need to be ashamed either, because G'd. knows your true soul -- understanding that sin is Just a result of one's inability to resist temptation. King David expressed the pains of every Jewish soul when he uttered these verses: "I am drowning in the thick mud with no place to stand . . . They that hate me without cause are more than the hairs on my head . . . They that sit in the gate speak against me; and the drunkards have made me their song." [Psalms 69:3,5,13] Afterward though, he said: ". . . But I place my prayer before You, Oh G'd, at a pleasing time. Oh G'd, in Your great mercy hear me -- in the truth of Your salvation." [Psalms 69:14] Prayer is a place to stand and rest -- even in the thick darkness below where there is no other ledge of support or meaning.

The sages explained that: "The meaning of standing is prayer, as it is written: 'Our feet are standing within your gates, Oh Jerusalem'

[Psalms 122:2] " [Tractate Berachos 6b] -- Jerusalem is the city of the Holy Temple, the very place of prayer. There, anyone and everyone can find the greatest support and meaning -- for with prayer one can come forever closer to G'd.

Though a person be far from the ways of holiness and Torah -- without even a single trait with which to encourage himself, he should nonetheless turn his eyes to the beauties above, and pray to the Almighty from wherever he is, for he certainly has hope in G'd.

All in all, if you want to know the true meaning of life, then cleave to both the Torah and prayer. With the two, everything will work out to perfection. just like close friends, they come to the aid of each other, saving you from all sorts of dangers in the path of righteousness, and bringing you back to G'd from anywhere in the entire universe.

8. Spiritual Real Estate

There is a law that "one cannot claim deception on land purchases." [Tractate Baba Metzia 4:9; See also Tractate Ketubos 99b] The simple explanation is that, unlike most other acquisitions, land is revealed for all to take note of its condition; and therefore the buyer cannot claim deception. Esoterically though, land is compared with prayer, which provides a 61 place to stand." Likewise, where there is prayer, there is also no room for deception.

The Satan and the Evil Urge are the source of all falsehood, as their ultimate purpose is only to deceive and rule over people. The Satan will use absolutely anything possible to cause a person's downfall. His single goal is to cause yet another to turn from the Way of Life. His ambitions of taking a person from both this world and the World to Come are

rooted in his senseless hatred of good and of mankind.

The Satan's joke upon mankind is absolutely vicious beyond measure. First of all, the pleasures of this temporary world come with much hard work and toil; and once attained, they are just as quickly gone. Secondly, squandering such hard -- earned joys most certainly leads only to the very dregs of bitterness -- for after the "show is over," the gnawing lack of something meaningful can really 'ust destroy a person, G'd forbid.

Rabbi Nachman exposed this also: "This mundane world can really fool us well, for with all of its sparkle, there is not a single person who has happlenss from it in the end." [Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom 51] This is why the Prophet Tzephaniah, when rebuilding the Jewish nation, called them "the oppressed City." [Tzephaniah 3:1] -- Oppressed here has the meaning of cheated, as the Metzudos Tzion explains: "They

allowed themselves to be vexed and did not investigate the Satan's deceit." [Metzudos Tzion ibid]

The side of evil afflicts all -- both the Jews and Gentiles. However, the oppression is often in different ways, and the Prophet Isaiah saw the ultimate conclusion long ago: and I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken of -- their own blood, as if from sweet wine." [Isaiah 49:26] Rashi explains that the nations of the world oppress us because they do not understand the reasons for our Commandments. [See Rashi on Numbers 19:1] This confusion and frustration incite them to take sides with the Satan. Of course, not all of the gentiles have fallen into this trap, but of those who have, their punishments await them, for the prophet warned them that their flesh and blood would be the price for their evil.

The answer for the non-Jewish world lies in the Seven Noachide Commandments. These

Laws were commanded to Noah and his descendants. Everyone who guards them will be granted a true relationship with G'd and with man -- joys which will hamper the Satan's plans against them. [The seven are as follows: (1) Not to worship idols. (2) Not to curse G'd. (3) Not to murder. (4) Not to commit adultery or incest. (5) Not to steal. (6) Not to eat flesh taken from a living animal. (7) To establish courts of justice. (This is according to the Rambam; Hilchos Malachim, Ch. 9 and 10.)]

However, the war with evil is much harder for the Jewish people since: "All who are greater than their peers have a greater Evil Urge." [Tractate Succah 52a] There is no reason to fear though, because the sages informed us that: "Before G'd created the disease, He created its cure." [Tractate Megilah 13b] Knowing Adam would fall prey to sin, G'd created the Torah as its cure

before even beginning the work of Creation.
[Tractate Pesachim 54a]

Twenty-six generations from the creation of man, the Jewish nation finally received the Torah and Commandments as a gift from G'd. Its six-hundred and thirteen Laws are the secret paths leading back to the Garden of Eden -- the mystical paradise of pure spiritual delight, existing far above the tormenting pains of exile and darkness inflicted by the cruel messengers of evil. [The 248 positive commandments correspond with the 248 limbs of a man's body, and the 365 prohibitions with the 365 days of the year -- hinting to the Torah's immense depth and its ability to raise man back to his G'dly source]

The Satan does not release his hold so easily though. He will first try his best to defend a life of vanity and of living for the moment. "The Torah is for the slave mentality. It is totally illogical." Or; "The Torah has no purpose for modern man." And of course,

there are the subtle. tricks to keep you from thinking altogether.

The truth is that many of the Torah's Charges and Prohibitions do have nearly unfathomable reasons. There is a restriction against wearing a garment woven of both wool and linen [Leviticus 19:19 and 20:25. Also Deuteronomy 22:11], and others warning us not to eat of "unclean" animals. [Leviticus 11:1-27 and 20:25. Also Deuteronomy 14:3-2] Yet, we are commanded just as strongly to keep these Laws as those commanding us not to murder, kidnap, or commit adultery. [Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17]

However, the Torah's Commandments are really not based on logical thought -- for the essence of the Commandments exist far beyond mans' reasoning capabilities. Mans' mind is limited, and we cannot hope to grasp more than a small fraction of the truth with mere earthly logic. G'd's Logic is perfect

though, and it is His very own Will and Reasoning which are expressed in the Torah's Commandments. Yet, we, as mere men can never hope to fathom the depths of the Torah's profound mysteries. And since we cannot objectively attain G'd's Reasoning, we cannot challenge His instructions for us to obey His Commandments, either. Our only answer is faith.

In order to develop a strong faith in G'd and His Torah, a person has to pray very hard, since prayer and faith are tightly bound. If you constantly beseech G'd that He help you have faith in the Torah and guard Its Laws, then the Evil Urge will never stand a chance. This is again the esoteric meaning of the law that "one cannot claim deception on land purchases." [Tractate Baba Metzia 4:9; See also Tractate Ketubos 99b] For when a person has prayer and faith -- the spiritual counterparts of land, he can never be cheated or fooled by evil.

It is written in Psalms: "Dwell upon the land and nurture faith." [Psalms 37:3] The greatest pillar and support a person can have in this world is to pray for help constantly, since this is the way to nurture faith. Everything else is founded upon prayer and countless praises were said of it; as it is written: "The land will exist forever" [Ecclesiastes 1:4] -- land referring to prayer, as explained earlier. The sages said: "Habbakuk came along and established the Torah on one foundation: but the righteous shall live by his faith." [Habbakuk 2:4] "[Tractate Machos 24a]

As long as a person has faith in G'd and prays in order to feed his faith, the Evil Urge will never succeed in throwing him down. Beseech G'd constantly that He bring you closer to Himself, and that you be found worthy of being His servant forever. Your past does not matter at all. No matter how far you may have fallen or how many times you

may have failed 'ust keep praying to G'd for more faith and for whatever else your heart desires.

If you gird yourself with this super-weapon, then the Evil Urge will certainly keep his distance, as seen from the Mishna that there is no deceit with land." No matter where a person might be in the world, if he lifts up his heart and prays to G'd to be freed from his chains of suffering, then he certainly has hopes of being saved, even after years and years of misery. Talk with G'd, explain your problems and feelings to Him and beg Him for help and happiness.

"To the Chief Musician, a Psalm of David. I patiently awaited the L'rd, and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He pulled me up from a horrible p t, out of the thick mud, and set my feet upon a rock, and made my path straight for me. And He put a new song in my mouth -- praise for our G'd. Many will see and fear, and will trust in G'd. Happy is the man

who makes G'd his trust, not giving respect to the proud or to those who turn aside to lies." [Psalms 40:1-5]

King David pleaded with G'd time after time and G'd brought him up from the places of filth and evil -- known as the horrible pit, the thick mire of hell. There, there is no place to even stand, for there is nothing of truth or value in its depths. Many have drowned there, but King David pleaded to G'd with great desperation, nearly melting away in hopes of being freed. This is why "He pulled me up from a horrible pit, out of the thick mud." [Psalms 40:1-5]

My brother, if you remember these secrets of prayer, and of always thirsting for G'd, then you will find a place to stand in even the musky depths where there are no places to stand! G'd will come to your aid, and you will soon know of His Infinite Love for you.

9. Getting High

The great tzadikim are constantly talking with the Almighty. Their lips move in earnest prayer throughout every minute of the day. This purifies their minds until they become worthy of extremely bright revelations of G'd's Presence -- all according to their own struggles and yearnings, and all according to the strength of their conversations with G'd.

Prayer and simple talk with G'd have this tremendous power because they correspond kabbalistically to Kingdom, as revealed in the Introduction to the Tikkunim. [Tikkunei Zohar; Introduction] Once in the realm of G'd's Kingdom, salvation will be quick to come, for "G'd is close to all those who call upon Him, to all those who call upon Him in truth." [Psalms 145:18]

Every time that you want to achieve a new goal, start to speak with G'd. Explain your

hopes and plans to Him as you would a good friend. In order to reach the hidden realms above, you must start by first talking with G'd. The reason is quite simple. The light emanating from the higher worlds is obviously too bright for you, since you have not yet been worthy of reaching it. The concepts of these higher realms are truly very great, but the only way to approach them is with simple yearning. Enter a new level by first accepting the fact that this exciting new world is also filled with G'd's Presence, and strengthen your faith in Him. Talk to G'd with the innocence of a small child. Tell Him how beautiful these new ideas are, and how you cannot bear being far away from Him anymore.

As long as you stay close to G'd by speaking with Him, the brilliant new light will not cause you the slightest harm. This is why the righteous constantly talk with G'd, for their

conversations allow them to soar on and on from one level to the next.

At first, G'd's great Wisdom can only be viewed through tremendous limitations and restrictions, just as complex ideas often have to be explained through day to day stories and examples. Elijah the Prophet exclaimed that: "No thought can come near to comprehending G'd." [Tikkunei Zohar 17a] Our only approach to G'd is through faith.

Simple faith is most important of all. It is known as the Lower Wisdom, [Chochmah Totah] and is the foundation of the entire Torah; as the Prophet Habbakuk said: "... but the righteous lives by his faith." [Habbakuk 2:4] King David also said it: "All of Your Commandments are faith." [Psalms 119:86]

The dreams and hopes of the people to come to a proper understanding of G'd and to Eternal Life can be realized only through their faith. Likewise, people with tremendous

mental powers, and even those who learn Torah with great expertise, must also base their divine service on plain, simple faith. This applies even to those who are versed in the esoteric wisdom in the teachings of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, (author of the Zohar), and in the writings of the Arizal and other such spiritual giants.

People have to strengthen themselves with faith alone, and be willing to discard their own ideas if they conflict with those of the Torah. No one has to feel foolish or unsure about following Its Dictates. All of our ancestors reached their levels this very same way, basing their entire lives on simple faith in G'd.

This is what is meant by the verse: "With this shall Aharon come into the holy (place)." [Leviticus 16:3] This refers to faith -- the Kingdom, which is the pillar of the entire Torah. "This is the commandment and the statutes and the judgments . . ."

[Deuteronomy 6:1] This symbolizes the Kingdom of constant prayer and faith.

It is mentioned in the Tikkumin that: "The prophets and seers are only allowed to reach the holiness by means of faith." [Tikkunei Zohar] This is the one and only way. Magical techniques, withcraft, herbs, and even bodily disciplines are all escapes from the true simple path. As the Torah says: "You shall be simple with the L'rd, your G'd." [Deuteronomy 18:13. For a more involved discussion on herbs and spiritual disciplines, see the Zohar on Exodus 80a-b]

". . . But unto the sons of the concubines of Abraham, Abraham gave gifts. And he sent them away from Isaac his son . . . eastward, unto the east country." [Genesis 25:6] The Zohar explains that: "these gifts were names of unclean powers and spirits. Isaac, (his holy son), was raised above these grades though, by the power of true faith." [Rashi ibid.; Zohar on Genesis 133b]

The Zohar explains further: "The reason Abraham sent these sons to the east was because the trappings of impure magicians and witchcraft were there. Behold, it is written: . . . and Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east." [Kings I 5:10] The children of the east refer to Abraham's descendants through his concubine, who dwelled in the mountains of the east, where they instructed people in the arts of magic and divination." [Rashi ibid.; Zohar on Genesis 133b] King Solomon's wisdom was greater though, because it was based on pure faith." [See Tractate Sanhedrin 91a and the Zohar on Exodus 80a]

Clear, simple faith in G'd is the key to absolutely every sort of knowledge. When King David would go up to the front lines of battle, he immersed himself in nothing but pure trust in G'd. He declared: "Even if a whole army encamps against me, even in this would I be confident." [Psalms 27:3] King

David had an unbelievably strong faith in G'd -- and this was his secret power against the evils which constantly struck at him throughout his life.

If you place your trust in G'd, as King David did, then you too will have the strength to succeed at pursuing holiness; as it is written: "In this I am confident" -- in this, my faith alone.

When the Prophet Jeremiah foresaw the long years that Israel would be exiled among the nations, he realized that our only hope would be our faith in G'd. "This I recall to mind, and therefore I have hope." [Lamentations 3:21] This -- the memory of true, innocent faith.

Jeremiah prophesied that at the end of this bitter exile, at the epoch of Meshlach -- the very days which we are now living through, the Satan and the forces of evil would lunge forth with terrific power, making the battle against "the Other Side" a desperate struggle.

Yet, even now, in the midst of these final days, those who are strong in faith and in speaking with G'd will emerge totally victorious and unscathed from even the hottest flames of battle, leaving the bitterness of exile far behind. If you hold on tightly to this golden path, especially that of speaking with G'd, you will gain so much strength with which to serve Him, that the forces of evil will collapse at your side. Such is the power of these holy secrets.

10. Preparing For War

When Israel went out to war, the Cohan, (the priest), would warn the troops: "Hear oh Israel, today you go to battle your enemies. Do not let your hearts weaken." [Deuteronomy 20:3] The sages interpret: "Even if the only merits you have are the mitzvah of reciting 'the Sh'ma' every day, (the

acceptance in faith of G'd's Rulership upon oneself, you are still worthy of defeating your enemies. " [Sifri ibid]

All wars, battles, and personal struggles which took place from the time of creation onward, are all bits and pieces of the central war -- the war against the Evil Urge. Hinting at this, the sages revealed: "When a person suffers here below, he also suffers above, (spiritually). [Tractate Sanhedrin 103b]

The real fight in life is against evil and sin. Therefore, the Cohan told the troops that G'd would defeat their enemies in the merits of their mere daily acceptance of His Rulership - - a consciousness attained by uttering the "Sh'ma Yisroel." He was merely reminding them that the enemy is really just a disguise of our very own inner struggles against evil -- the cruel forces trying to distract us from serving G'd. He reminded them that in the merit of their faith, symbolized by the "Sh'ma

Yisroel," they would emerge victorious over their enemies.

When a person enters into battle though, he puts himself into terrible danger, since all sorts of spiritual killers then become aroused, who are all seeking just the right moment to pounce upon him with passions -- in order to tear him away from serving G'd. So my brother, stand up tall and brace yourself. Cleave to the Almighty with all of your might. Lean on G'd. He will give you infinite support. Serve Him with your whole life and blood, for all it takes is faith. Talk over your adventures and problems with Him just like a son with his father. This magical talk will save you from all sorts of terror. All of your fears will fade away if you hold on to G'dliness well, then even throes of passion will not arouse you toward evil. Nothing will be able to take you from G'd, or to even upset you. And great self-confidence will be seen in

your every move, leaving the enemy weak and helpless.

"Hear, oh Israel, you go to battle this day." [Deuteronomy 20:3] -- With the merits you possess from merely saying the Sh'ma every day, [Sifri ibid] as mentioned above. This is because the Sh'ma is the backbone of strength and faith, as seen from its first verse: "Hear, oh Israel, the L'rd is G'd, the L'rd is One." [Deuteronomy 6:4]

G'd's Oneness fills the entire universe. Once you realize this, standing entranced in the chambers of His Palace -- speak with Him! Ask the Almighty to help you come close to Him. Speak with pure innocence and simplicity, and then nothing else will continue to hold importance.

Unite with G'd as His holy servant. Attach yourself to His Glorious Presence with total purity. Cleave to Him. Let the thunders of your heart bring you to total repentance.

Your closeness to G'd will protect you from every danger in the entire world. Your enemies will lose their power to even scare you. The cruelest will become harmless, as seen by the Cohan's next words: "Do not let your hearts weaken, do not fear or tremble, and do not be terrified of them." [Deuteronomy 20:3] Place your stampeding horses, the trust in G'd and stand up tall. "The noise of running feet and the trumpet blasts" are all a big bluff -- do not let them bother you in the least. [See Deuteronomy 20:1 and Rashi's comments] Understand, my brother that all of these war tactics are used by the Evil Urge as well. His devious psychology is all a big war game.

Anyone who ever started to serve the Side of Holiness will realize these "tricks of the trade" right from the start. Whether you are suspecting or naive, the telltale hints are there for all to see. The Satan and his gang create all sorts of glimmer and sparkle. They

will do anything to lure you back to evil, but do not be fooled, they are only jealous of your intimate closeness with G'd. [See Genesis 2:25 and 3:1. Rashi explains that the snake was aroused to seek Adam's downfall upon seeing him have zivvug with Eve.] This causeless hatred and jealousy incite them to all of their devious plots. "The Other Side" may try to make the yoke of divine service heavy upon you by presenting doubt raising questions, or try to make you feel guilty, but simplicity will save you of all danger, as the Torah Commands: "Be simple with the L'rd, your G'd." [Deuteronomy 18:13]

Unfortunately, "the Other Side" has tremendous powers. Many people turn away from even the start of serving G'd upon confronting the pains and disciplines involved. However, this is all the work of the Satan, the big pessimist, who spreads forth depressing delusions before his victims. This is all represented by the stampeding horses and

the other war tactics. The key advice is merely not to give in. All of these threatening feelings are passing illusions. A big bluff all aimed at pulling you away from serving G'd.

You will soon see that serving G'd is really not that hard, and that it is filled with tremendous reward and excitement. Day to day events can easily become filled with the pleasure of Paradise. Do not be frightened by fantasies of evil which might pass your way. The Rebbe said that: "In this world a person has to cross over an extremely narrow bridge; but most important of all is not to be scared." [Likutei Moharon II; 48] This courage comes from faith. Place your trust only in G'd, Who fills every corner of the universe with His Glory. His infinite Might and unbounded Kindness fill the entire world. Do not let your heart weaken, for G'd is with you to protect you from all harm.

"I, will not fear, G'd is with me, I will not fear."
[Psalms 118:6] As long as I have faith in G'd,

then He will be with me constantly, since the whole earth is filled with His Glory." [Isaiah 6:3] What can mortal man possibly do to me anyway? My soul is an eternal gift from G'd, living on forever and ever -- independent of my earthly body.

If you live with pure, simple faith, you will surely succeed, and you will be worthy of true repentance -- for: "This, (faith), have I placed upon my heart." [Lamentations 3:21]

11. Hidden Treasures

My precious brother, it has been said so many times already, but there is still place for more -- speaking simply with G'd is absolutely the most precious advice you will ever receive on how to gain an understanding of the Almighty.

In a person's true search for G'd, he will acknowledge that all revolves around innocent faith, for the conclusion of knowledge reveals that total understanding can never be attained. Man's intelligence and reasoning are limited, and where our knowledge ends, faith begins. G'd says: "I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there are no G'ds." [Isaiah 44:6] -- I am symbolizes the Kingdom and faith, as known to those familiar with the mystical wisdom. Faith is first, and faith is last -- for even with the deepest understanding, all must be accepted on faith.

Therefore, the world needs a very great leader and guide who has the power to direct all people back to G'd and holiness. Many people wander through life with mere common sense and the ability to reason, thereby condemning themselves from ever reaching the higher realms of G'dliness. Yet, even the outstanding geniuses are in great

danger -- for: "No thought can ever grasp You." [Tikkunei Zohar 17a]

Cunning, calculating schemes can leave a person very far from a true understanding of G'd. Mental gymnastics for their own sake will certainly not bring a person closer to the divine delights of knowing G'd. The ways of philosophy can lead right down the road to an outright denial of G'd's very Existence. Another tragic problem is that people come to exclude themselves from the Torah, thinking their surface understanding of some of the Laws exempts them from living a Torah life.

The real road to truth is to constantly strengthen your belief in G'd with prayer and yearning, and by working hard in the Torah -- "for everything is in it." [Ethics of the Fathers 5:28]

The tzadikim of each generation are our guides to this true faith. They possess

infinitely valuable treasures gathered from the most beautiful places of Torah Wisdom and are constantly struggling to fill the world with true belief and knowledge of G'd. The tzadikim reveal all of these concepts along with their deep feelings for G'd for the whole world to see and learn from. They encourage everyone to strengthen their faith in G'd, and to talk with Him as often as possible. The greatest efforts must be directed at finding them and drawing close to them. These tzadikim completely reveal the path of faith, and preach on endlessly of talking with G'd in total simplicity.

Many people are very far from finding them and from grasping their hidden words though, for these righteous men are really only content in the spiritual heights, far above the interests of this mundane world -- so their words are often hidden. Yet everyone can merit discovering these tzadikim and

their tremendous secrets by beseeching G'd to reveal them.

Speaking with such tzadikim will enable a person to assess his own place in the world, let him know exactly where the Evil Urge awaits him, and enlighten him on how to truly succeed in life. Happy is the one who merits to acquire such a leader and teacher who can guide him in this golden way of life.

12. Freedom of Speech

Speaking freely with G'd is the backbone of divine service. When attempting to have such simple conversation, one may encounter various distractions. Many times, a person will get ready to speak with G'd, and all sorts of questions will enter his mind. Many of these questions will be very confounding. For instance, the sages revealed that: "Everything is in the hands of heaven except for the fear

of heaven." [Tractate Berachos 33b] In other words, G'd has given us free choice to serve Him as we see fit. If so, how can we pray for help in serving Him -- as the choice is in our own hands?

When Rabbi Nachman revealed this foundation of "hissbodedus," (speaking with G'd), 1, (Rabbi Nosan), spoke with him a while concerning it. "Aren't people given free choice?" (People always have free choice, why then must we constantly pray and talk with G'd?) He answered in a roundabout way, replying: "Even so!" -- meaning, even though this is a very strong question and I cannot explain the concept to you adequately, you must still accustom yourself to it. I was not able to probe further, for I knew that I could pose this question concerning the entire array of prayers which the sages arranged for us on repentance and coming closer to G'd.

However, Rabbi Nosan later explained this puzzle in depth. The explanation is that the

best use of free choice is to choose G'd Himself as your help in serving Him.

Pray to G'd and tell Him you only want to do what He wants you to do. Pray to be saved from the Evil Urge and his gang of cruel cohorts. Your questions and doubts will then melt away, leaving you in total awe of G'd, with a clear mind and heart to serve Him.

This is why the tzadikim all pray so much -- even though they are far from sin, there is always more and more to discover in serving G'd, and this is what they are constantly searching after.

There are countless stories of tzadikim who all struggled ceaselessly in their holy work of revealing G'dliness to the world. Many'composed the most heartbreaking prayers, begging G'd to take action and save us from the Evil Urge. In the prayers fixed for us long ago by the Men of the Great Assembly, we also see such requests. Three

times a day we pray: "Bring us back, dear Father, to Your Torah, and draw us close, our King, to Your Service. Help us return in true repentance to You." [The Shmoneh Esrei prayer] Three times a day -- yearning and praying for 'ust the inspiration to repent and truly serve G'd.

Yet the freedom of choice always remains in our hands just as it always was. The Evil Urge can attack at an y time, so you must constantly strive to surrender your entire will and being over to G'd in true yearning. Develop and strengthen your simple faith in the wise men of old, who instructed us in this path and lived it themselves. Pray to G'd constantly, and beseech Him from your deep thirst and yearning to serve Him, for this is the pillar upon which everything else revolves.

13. The Double Edged Sword-I

There are two distinct ways of serving G'd. The first is to be willing to use the mind and the powers of reasoning. It is not always easy to immerse your entire mind into the logic at hand fallen fragments but when you do succeed at it, all of the of divine light and misunderstood concepts will all merge together in glorious harmony as they were originally. The sages said this long ago when they revealed that: "With thought everything becomes clear." [Zohar on Exodus 254b]

The second way of serving G'd though, is the central pillar -- developing a perfect faith in Him. This is the foundation upon which everything else is based , just as King David said: "All of Your Commandments are faith." [Psalms 119:86]

Everyone has to work to subdue the forces of emptiness which are bred by "the Other Side" -- the side of vanity and death. However, no breed of reasoning w'll be strong enough to dispel th'ese treacherous forces by itself -- for faith is needed as well.

If "the Other Side" overcomes a person, he may be blinded from following the path of G'dliness, and in such a case, he must ultimately know G'd by faith alone. Without this belief, a person would encounter difficulty in keeping the Torah's Laws, for they are all based on faith. However, when you accept this belief, and commit yourself to acknowledge G'd's Presence even here in the materialistic world full of vanity and illusion, then you will be given tremendous strength -- enough to help you keep all of the Torah's Commandments. You will be able to serve G'd with great power of mind, and with true intelligence, since your belief will be rooted in an unshakable faith in G'd and the Torah.

This outlook will help you destroy all sorts of lusts and bad feelings. Then, with the power of thought, you will be able to completely free the feelings and visions of holiness from the forces of "the Other side" -- forces which only exist because of previously misunderstood concepts and feelings. It is specifically through the powers of mind that the holiness is freed, as the sages said "With thought, everything becomes clear." [Zohar on Exodus 254b] Look well into these words, for many deep secrets are contained herein.

14. The Double Edged Sword-II

These two distinct ways of intelligence and faith are none other than Torah and prayer. They are inseparable companions, and a person will be capable of the greatest of feats if he learns how to use them correctly. King Solomon said: "Better are two than one,

[Ecclesiastes 4:9] for if one falls, the other will come to his aid. These friends are Torah study and prayer -- corresponding to intelligence and faith, and the two are eternally bound to each other.

Prayer corresponds with faith, as it is written, (of Moses): and his hands were of faith." [Exodus 17:12] The Targum interprets: "and his hands were spread forth in prayer."

Torah, on the other hand, corresponds with intelligence and the mind, as the Torah Itself testified in Proverbs: "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence . . . Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine. By Me kings reign, and princes decree Justice." [Proverbs 8:12, 14-15]

This awesome combination can completely destroy the lusts and passions which ascend from "the Other Side" -- forces which continually tempt us to live for the moment,

instead of for G'd. Originally, all of the spiritual "vessels" were still intact, and our battle with "the Other Side" was not as demanding. Adam, the first man, had a perfect understanding of G'd and lived in complete unity with Him. G'd's Oneness pervaded his entire being and consciousness. The very blueprint of Creation was known to him, and he was intimately close with G'd as he frolicked about in Paradise.

Somehow though, he was tricked into sin, and this caused the "vessels" to shatter, leaving him confused and broken, with the entrance to the mystical "Garden of Eden" slammed closed behind him.

When the vessels were shattered, the concepts of G'd and of holiness became concealed -- since light could no longer be contained within these vessels of understanding.

Different evil forces were allowed to rule when the vessels were first broken. These destructive forces or husks emanate from "the Other Side," a power rooted in this mundane universe -- a realm hiding G'd's Presence and eternal life.

However, prayer and Torah study are the keys leading back to "Gan Eden," and when Adam started to Pray and delve into the Torah after his sin, he fixed countless numbers of these spiritual vessels -- but there were many others which were still left in need of repair.

Learning Torah and praying to G'd draw out the holiness and the ways of righteousness from amongst the "husks of 11" to which they fell, uniting us again with G'd, Who is anxiously awaiting our return.

Start praying to G'd and beg Him to bring you closer to true worship and devotion. Talk with Him. Cry and shat. Let yourself melt

away before Him in dire pleading for an even greater revelation of His Oneness. Pray for your family and friends and for the entire Jewish nation. Speak with Him as you would talk to a good friend. G'd has in His possession every treasure, and He wants nothing other than to bestow upon you every last one. Show Him your loyalty. Contemplate the Torah's Commandments and ask for understanding and for a desire to fulfill Its Laws. Ask G'd that He allow your love of Him to forever burn forth and inspire you to fulfill His Mitzvot in great joy.

King David prayed of G'd: "Might all who are G'dly pray unto You at a favorable time: that when the great waters flood forth, they not reach them." [Psalms 32:6] These waters are the turbid waters of lust and passion which constantly seek to seduce mankind to the undercurrents of temporary earthly pleasures. These forces have tremendous power, and have lured away great masses of

people from the "Ways of Life," may G'd's mercy spare us.

However, these great flooding waters won't reach the righteous -- due to the merit of their prayers. There is no great wisdom or understanding that is strong enough by itself to subdue these threatening waters when they rise up upon a person. The one weapon is prayer and a pure desire for G'd. Talk with G'd and tell Him of your great well of love for Him, thereby halting these flooding waters. Ask G'd to help you fight off these vain attacks of "the Other Side." Though a person has free will and can do as he chooses, the greatest decision one can make -- especially at such time, is to pray continuously and beg G'd to help you battle off these treacherous feelings. The only course of action is to hold on and not give in to the attacking waves. Pray and beseech G'd that from now on He come to your aid and advise you on all of your decisions and choices.

A mere mortal mind cannot grapple with such rushes of lust and passion. These "waters of desire" assume tremendous appeal. The mind may perceive the evil involved, but temptation is often too strong for it. Therefore, put your trust in G'd and pray to Him with all of your might that He spare you from the rampant dangers.

By sharing your problems with G'd and by asking for help, the hidden treasures will come within your reach. Separate yourself from the ways of evil and cling t'ightly to holiness. The fallen fragments of holiness will all be freed, delivering you at once from the waters of desire and granting you tremendous divine wisdom.

Yet, you must remain on guard even after attaining great divine wisdom and purity. The sages said: "With each day a person's Evil Urge attempts his downfall, and if it were not for G'd's intervening, a person would certainly fall prey to him." [Tractate

Kiddushin 30a] The Evil Urge comes from the side of emptiness and vanity. But even so, the allurements are many and all too enchanting -- unless help comes from above. This all illustrates even more clearly the necessity of constantly begging G'd for help and of always talking with Him. Speaking with G'd will help you destroy any passion which bothers you. If you discard your own free will and place your entire trust in G'd and in His Torah, the evil forces will no longer stand a chance against you.

The "Satan" will attempt to make this simple task of speaking with G'd appear hard and bitter, while in truth, it is very gratifying and rewarding. Simply speak with G'd despite any annoyances, and they too will fall away.

Those warriors carrying the "sword of prayer" are the true Masters of Choice -- for by riding the path of faith and prayer, they choose a life of truth -- just like King David, who said: "The path of faith have I chosen."

[Psalms 119:30] Abandoning one's own reasoning in order to chase after pure faith and prayer is the epitomy of choice, since these are the pillars of the entire Torah. The sages explained: "Habbakuk came and established the Torah on one foundation: 'The righteous lives by his faith.' [Habbakuk 2:4] " [Tractate Machos 24a]

Speak with G'd and develop a true belief and trust in Him. With G'd's help, the path of Torah and Mitzvot will then shine forth with their awesome light. An incredibly deep understanding of Torah will also be yours -- all in the merit of your true faith.

15. Taking justice Into Your Own Hands

When a person's faith is very strong, and he reaches the point of comprehending that everything in the entire world is a part of G'd, he will then be living on par with the World

to Come. The hidden light reserved for the righteous in the World to Come will begin to shine forth to him. [Tractate Chagiga 12a; Rashi on Genesis I:4] This light is a special gift, revealed only to those worthy of it. In order to reach this tremendous treasure one must first have much simple conversation with the Almighty. Merely speak with G'd, and explain all of your doubts and questions to Him, confessing all of your misdeeds as well.

You will then come to realize that G'd's Oneness is the very source of blessing, as the sages have said, commenting on the Messianic Era: "'In that day G'd will be one, and His name one.' [Zechariah 14:9] We will then realize that everything is in complete harmony, and we will be able to truly bless G'd as good and as the doer of good." [Tractate Pesachim 50a] In other words, we will then understand His kindness on the sad occasions as well as on the pleasant ones.

Severe judgement and suffering are all a result of our distance from G'd's Oneness. G'd is good and does good to all and the main hold that the evil has upon a person is due to his complexities which keep him from knowing G'd in a personal way. This is related to King Solomon's conclusion in Ecclesiastes: "Behold, this only have I found: G'd has made man upright, but they have sought out many complications." [Ecclesiastes 7:29. See Rabbi Nachman's conclusions in Likutei Moharon 51]

When a person acknowledges G'd's righteousness even upon receiving severe Judgements, and strives at the same time to correct the fault on his own, then the 'udgements will no longer need to disguise themselves in the form of physical harm. When you accept such 'udgements upon yourself by acknowledging your sins, all of the corresponding terror will totally disappear -- bringing you to a true awe of

G'd." [Likutel Moharon i5] In addition, when a person acknowledges such judgements, G'd will add mercy to the decree and even totally forgive the person at hand, since He is gracious and merciful, and full of goodness.

When a bad judgement is not acknowledged however, then it is forced to "dress itself" as an unpleasant occurrence or tragedy, G'd forbid. Authority is given to whom it is given, and these evil forces complete the written decree.

As mentioned before, mans' greatest lacking is that of simplicity, so you will effect the greatest cure possible by explaining all of your problems and complications to G'd. Pray and beg for G'd's mercy -- that He reconsider any bad Judgements or suffering sent forth against you. Bow down before G'd, and beg of Him that He deal with us beyond the letter of the law. Promise Him that from now on you will try to serve Him truthfully. Always keep in mind G'd's righteousness. King David sang

so many times of it: "And You are righteous concerning all that comes upon us, for truth have You done." [Nechemia 9:33] "To you, oh G'd, is the righteousness, yet to us, shame of face." [Daniel 9:7] We do not always understand it, but everything G'd does is always in our greatest interests.

Of course, G'd's greatest desire is that His people come back to Him without any hardships, and this is our greatest dream, to be realized soon in our time.

16. The Camouflaged Judgement

King David beseeched G'd: "Judge me, oh G'd, and plead my cause." [Psalms 43:1] -- Allow my judgements to ar'se from before You. Yet in another place, he pleads: "Don't come upon your servant in judgement." [Psalms 143:2] The two do not however contradict. King David was really requesting that all his

judgements come solely from G'd, as it is written: "Judge me, oh G'd . . ." [Psalm 43:1] - - for then the Judgements will most certainly be with mercy and compassion. Keep the 'udgement from taking effect in outside ways though, which is the meaning of the other verse: "Do not come upon your servant in Judgement." [Psalms 143:2] This second request involves the idea of G'd allowing a decree to "disguise itself," and punish in an unrelated and frustrated way, as revealed by the verse: "Behold, I, (G'd), come upon you in a thick cloud." [Exodus 19:9] The thick cloud hides G'd's Presence. Yet this is only if we are unworthy.

Really, G'd's Presence pervades the entire universe, filling all of creation with His glory. Nothing exists apart from G'd. if you remember G'd and do not allow yourself to forget Him for even an instant, you will eventually come very close to Him. By always analyzing your ways and constantly

acknowledging any wrong actions, you will merit this blessing of always having G'd's blissful companionship.

Your closeness to G'd will let you behold any harsh judgements while they are still harmless, sparing you from all sorts of destruction and danger. This is the meaning of King David's prayer: "From before You may my Judgements arise."

. . . However, if a person stops talking with G'd and from constantly judging Himself, then G'd will also do the same, and turn away from before him. This abandonment could cause the person to forget the reckoning and accounting of the World to Come. If a person made himself distant from G'd here, then he will find the Almighty just as far away in the next world. When the 'udgement day arrives, G'd will "veil" Himself and attend the reckoning in dark disguise, making it extremely hard to find Him in order to plead for mercy.

If a person did not have the merit to 'udge himself and repent before a 'udgement, then he should at least return to G'd after the decree has gone forth. This will certainly "sweeten" the udgement if it does not annul it completely.

Undertand well that nothing in the entire world can cause you harm or suffering unless it is so decreed from above. When a person is in fear of G'd, he will be constantly inspired to repent of his doubtful acts. Yet, if he forgets G'd, then this awe descends upon the beings and objects of this mundane world, where it can unleash tragic destruction, G'd forbid. This is why people are sometimes in terror of other people or have other sorts of phobias and neuroses -- they are all a manifestation of "fallen fears" -- fears not displayed toward G'd Himself.

Therefore, examine well all of your deeds, and acknowledge your sins with great anguish and regret. Renew your

determination and will to go on serving G'd. You will then see how all of your worries and fears melt away from before you. This is because you have elevated the "fallen fears" to their spiritual sources, causing the decrees to be annulled.

The sages said: "A person should pray before suffering arrives." [Tractate Sanhedrin 17b] Even though pain may stir a person to change his erring ways, why wait for affliction?

Afflictions are a result of a person's "fallen fears." The entire array of demonic forces feed on a person's strange fears and fantasies. It is a terribly vicious cycle, for the more a person suffers, the more these fiends aggravate the situation, conceal the ways of G'dliness, and confuse their victims.

Therefore, it pays to gather strength from the start, and overtake any judgements while you still can by crying in anguish over past evils -- lest judgements be forced to express

themselves in frustrated ways, causing pain and suffering, G'd forbid.

Now, King David's plea is clear: "Do not come upon Your servant in judgement." -- Hold back any harsh decrees from me. Give me the wisdom to see my wrongdoings before they reach this point. Don't let them masquerade as hardship and trouble. It is much too hard to return to You from the clouded darkness, where the ways of righteousness are hidden and the suffering seems undeserved. Rather: "You 'udge me, oh G'd, and plead my cause . for then the decree will be much lighter and more compassionate -- reflecting the Almighty Himself

17. Escaping Pain and Doubt

The redemptions of G'd are like the blink of an eye. If you merely encourage yourself to pray and converse with G'd, then you will be

freed quickly from all suffering. In fact, you will not even remember your hardships as your soul unites with G'd in warmth and closeness.

The greatest pain and suffering come from having a lack of faith in G'd. Therefore, work hard at talking with Him, and your faith will grow with each new moment. You will soon realize that the whole purpose of your suffering was just to bring you to a stronger love for G'd, as the sages have said: "Which are the afflictions of love? Those which do not take you from prayer." [Tractate Berachos 35a]

Throw yourself upon G'd with prayer, for this is the greatest pleasure there is, as the sages said, commenting on the verse: "What is beautiful and what is sweet?" [Song of Songs 7:7] -- "What is sweeter than prayer?" [Song of Songs Rabbah ibid] Beseeching the Almighty is the most rewarding pleasure in the entire world. just imagine yourself before

G'd's majestic Presence, talking and sharing your heart with the Creator Himself, as if you were with a close friend. What could be greater than conversing and sharing your heart with G'd?

Rabbi Nachman said explicitly: "On every occasion there is reason to pray. If your garment tears and you have to replace it, pray to G'd that He provide you with a new one. And similarly, everything else -- whether large or small. Become accustomed to constant prayer. Ask G'd concerning your every desire.

Granted, that it is most important to pray for the essentials -- that you be found worthy of truly serving G'd and of coming ever closer to Him; but the lesser things need prayer too." The Rebbe continued on, say'ng that: "Anyone who does not conduct himself this way, despite the fact that G'd grants him clothing, a livelihood, and the other necessities of life, is no better than a beast.

People must draw down their very existence and being, as well as all of their mundane needs from G'd by praying and beseeching Him for absolutely everything." [Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom 232]

This is what the sages said: "All who pray and (only) afterward leave on their journeys, will have all of their lackings fulfilled by G'd." [Tractate Berachos 14a] -for by praying beforehand, a person shows faith and trust that G'd will grant him success.

Simple words of prayer are the most important task in life. Pray for mercy and request your desires from G'd with great longing. Ask and beg for a share of His pure kindness though undeserved. Speak and converse with Him, and add all sorts of details to the conversation, since every word you utter will be eagerly heard, and your prayers will be preserved forever and ever -- for the sages have said: "All who lengthen

their prayers will never see them return unfulfilled." [Tractate Berachos 32b]

Prayer and conversation with G'd require great encouragement though, for the answers do not always come immediately. The sages explained: "Four things require encouragement, and one of them is prayer, so if a man sees that his prayers remain unanswered, he should go back and pray yet more." [Ibid] Likewise we see by Hannah who "continued praying", [Samuel I 1:12] and was later granted all of her desires. [See Yerushalmi Berachos; Ch. 3, Halacha 1]

Praying and talking with G'd require tremendous will power and stubbornness, since all sorts of doubts and weaknesses can influence one all too easily. These forces of doubt all emerge from a most powerful realm known as "Haman-Amalek." [In Hebrew, the words for doubt and Amalek have the same numerical value -- revealing their strong relationship] This is the very factory of

emptiness and death the place where feelings of despair and depression are bred forth. Their purpose? None other than to turn people away from prayer and divine conversation. This shell of "Amalek" crouches in wait, to infect the hearts of men with thoughts of doubt and melancholy. They try to make it seem as if G'd has not yet even begun to help us, while in truth, we have all seen with our own eyes many profound examples of His tremendous love for us. He has dealt kindly with every last one of us on countless occasions. G'd has caused miracles for us in every generation -- to this very day. He freed us from Egypt. He gave us the Torah. He helped Joshua and Israel capture the Holy Land from the idolatrous nations, along with its thirty-one kings. The miracles which occurred in the days of King David and Solomon are also of the most wondrous, but every generation has its share of G'd's amazing acts and salvations. Yet, with all this, "Amalek" still seeks the upper hand. His only

joy is upon seeing a man's heart filled with despair, convinced that G'd has not yet even heard his pleas, and it is his success which is the root cause of Israel's prolonged exile.

This explains why the episode of Amalek's attack on Israel in the desert follows the verse describing their lack of faith in G'd. The people asked: "Is G'd in our midst or not?" G'd took Israel out of Egypt with great signs and wonders: parting the Red Sea for them; providing them with riches and even with food from heaven. When Israel lacked nothing more than sweet water though, they despaired of G'd, asking: "Is G'd in our midst or not?" [Exodus 17:7]

The next verse states: "And Amalek came and battled with Israel." [Exodus 17:8] As already explained, all of Israel's doubts come from this empty husk called "Haman-Amalek" -- who then struck in the physical realm as well.

These two verses are adjoining, as Rashi reveals: "G'd says: 'I am constantly among them to prepare all of their needs, and they ask, "Is G'd among us or not?" [Exodus 17:7] By your very lives then, might a dog come and bite you. Then you will cry to Me, seeking Me out very desperately.' This is similar to a man giving his son a ride upon his shoulders. When they go out on the road, the child sees something he wants and says: 'Father, pick up that thing for me.' They go along, and the child sees another thing and asks his father again to give him the object, and the father once again obliges him. And again a third time. They later come across a man, and the child asks the man, 'Have you seen my father?' The boy's father angrily exclaims, 'You do not even know where I am?' He then casts him down and along comes a dog and bites him." [Rashi ibid]

Therefore, constantly remind yourself of the good turns already shown to you by G'd and

pray that He may continue to show you His kindness. Gird yourself with stronger and stronger prayers and beseech G'd with hope and longing; and you will surely be saved.

18. Aim Your Weapons

The sword of prayer is a very precious weapon. However, one must keep it sharp at all times and learn to use it correctly. Keep praying time after time, even if you don't see any results. Do not think that your talks and prayers are worthless. Know for a fact, my brother, and have faith, that not a single word is ever lost. Every supplication and conversation causes a tremendous effect, bringing you closer and closer to the ultimate goal. Eventually, G'd's mercy will be aroused, inspiring you to return to Him with your whole heart.

Rabbi Nachman explained: "A person's prayers must be aimed within a hair's breadth, and he must not miss. That is, he must not turn to either the right or the left." [Likutei Moharon 2] Rabbi Nosan explained further, [Likutei Halachos; Hilchos Nachalos, Halacha 4] that turning to the left represents the idea of imagining that your prayers have been in vain -- for one's answers are not always seen -- immediately. Many people have made this tragic mistake, causing them tremendous anguish, and making them feel foolish for le'aning on G'd. Their mistake is in assuming that G'd is merciless, G'd forbid, and that He refuses to hear the prayers of His chosen people. Uust as the left hand is passive, and less capable, so too, do they imagine the Almightyv incapable of having mercy and answering their prayers.)

Turning toward the right represents the idea of a person ceasing from prayer and relying solely on G'd's kindness. This would be a

tremendous error, for we must all do our own part of the task by praying, even though the true salvation only comes from G'd Himself -- given as a token of His great kindness.

When these two errors are corrected, then one's prayers will have the power of a very sharp sword, enough to subdue the enemy's entire legion.

If you are constantly in the midst of prayer, and at the same time realize that your salvation is dependent on G'd, then you will be putting this weapon to its most effective use. Understand, that if G'd answers US, it is solely because of His infinite kindness. Yet, even so, we have to fulfill our own role of constant prayer, which carries the power to arouse G'd's kindness.

G'd will surely answer all those who pray to Him -- the most essential foundation is therefore to constantly beseech Him. Pray to

G'd endlessly, and you will surely be granted all of your heart's desires.

19. The Poor Have More

It is essential to pray with intense concentration and feeling, and to understand the meaning of the words you utter. The sages said: "If you turn your heart to your prayers, then you can be assured that your prayers were heard." [Yerushalmi Berachos; ch. 5, Halacha 4]

Rabbi Nachman explained that it is precisely this need for concentration which gives the great advantage to speaking with G'd in your own simple way. The fixed prayers were arranged long ago, so therefore, the evil spiritual powers are all familiar with them. They wait by the "roadside" of these prayers - - prepared to distract and lure you away from true prayer.

However, when you travel a new road of prayer which they are still unaware of, then you will be free to pray on and on without any interference. In other words, when you speak with G'd in your own way, you speak from your heart -- so there is no room for you to lose interest or yearning. Your own words will lead you further and further into the depths of your heart and soul." [See Likutei Moharon II; 84]

This is why those tzadikim who follow this path are constantly talking with G'd, and why G'd always listens to their prayers -- for the sages said: "Why are the prayers of tzadikim compared to a doe? [In Hebrew, the word 'ayalos' denotes a doe as well as prayer.] just as a doe's antlers constantly divide while it is growing, so too the righteous -- as long as they continue praying, their prayers are heard." [Tractate Yoma 29a]

All of a person's prayers, both the traditional ones, as well as his personal talks with G'd, all

ascend and arrive at the high places they are destined for. When they reach these places, they will "sweeten" any harsh Judgements and annul any evil decrees brought against a person. This is what the sages also said: "Why are the prayers of the tzadikim compared with a pitchfork? [The Hebrew word 'atayr' denotes a pitchfork as well as prayer.] Just as a pitchfork moves the produce in the threshing floor from place to place, so also the prayers of the righteous -- they cause G'd to change His appearance from one of anger and wrath to one of mercy." [Tractate Succali 11a]

Those who accustom themselves to this holy task of constantly speaking with G'd, will enter very wondrous places, and G'd will lift them to tremendous heights -- since this holy deed is higher than all others. It is indeed higher, for it draws faith down to the world -- the opening leading closest of all to G'd's Presence.

Rabbi Nachman revealed: "The greatest connection and attachment to G'd comes with prayer, since prayer is the main gate through which one enters the realm of G'dliness. Once there, G'd's Essence will become known to the person, since prayer reveals G'd's entire Kingdom." [Likutei Moharon II; 84]

Rabbi Nachman also emphasized that a person should be a real "die-hard" when it comes to serving G'd. Really, one needs this determination in every facet of divine service -- at every action and turn. It is most needed while praying and seeking G'd though, and especially while speaking with Him on your own.

Prayer and stubbornness are closely related, [See Rashi on Genesis 30:8.] and a person really has to be quite persevering to achieve his goals, even if it seems that his prayers have not yet taken effect, and his mind yet far away. -- Even if a person works feverishly at this for years, without yet seeing the fruits of

his labors, he must still remain stubborn, and complete the task.

To speak with G'd, you must be extremely determined and ready to wrestle with despair, for you may go through countless sessions of seemingly unheard prayers. In fact, this is akin to what is revealed in the following passage of the Zohar. "Rabbi Abba expounded on the verse: 'A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed.' [Psalms 102:1] Rabbi Abba explained: There are three whose prayers are mentioned in the Torah: Moses, David, and the afflicted. The prayer of Moses was indeed unique, and so too that of David, but the prayer of the poor man is the greatest of all, and takes precedence over all other prayers. The reason is that the poor man has a broken heart, and it is written: 'G'd is close to those with a broken heart.' [Psalms 34:19]

A poor man often quarrels with G'd, but G'd listens and hears his words. When he prays,

he opens all the windows of the heavens, and all other prayers must make way for that of the broken hearted pauper. G'd says: 'Let all of the other prayers wait, that this one enter before Me. I do not need a court to judge between us, let his complaint come before Me, and I and he will remain alone.'

None of the angels know exactly what occurs with the poor man's prayer and with all of his complaints, for when he pours forth his tears and bitterness before the Almighty, these prayers ascend to the highest of places. So if a man puts himself in the position of the poor, his prayers will arise and join the other prayers of the poor and will ascend with them -- being favorably received by the King." [Zohar on Numbers 191a]

This was all said concerning a poor person who was merely praying for his needs and earthly oppression. It is true all the more so when one starts to take pity on himself by taking account of his spiritual situation,

feeling poor and empty of good deeds. When he brings his claims before G'd, arguing and raving with G'd for not yet letting him draw close-talking and pouring out his heart until he comes to tears, this sight is precious beyond imagination. This prayer on behalf of one's spiritual needs surpasses all other prayers since such poverty is the main lacking and oppression that exists, as the sages have revealed: "There is no poverty except for one of knowledge." [Tractate Nedarim 41] Other than this, all is vanity and emptiness. Our days here are like a passing shadow. [Rosh HaShanah liturgy] There is no pain like the suffering of one's soul, and there is no poverty which compares with a lack of Torah wisdom and of good deeds.

A person's prayers will carry even more weight if he is in a state of debt, owing the Almighty great sums by means of his sins and transgressions, having nothing at all to repay the debt other than prayer and yearning.

When such a person is worthy of arousing himself to feel his terrible state and to stand before G'd on the doorsteps as a poor, broken-hearted soul-begging and pleading for pity, one can imagine the great mercy he will inspire from above.

King David pleaded: "What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your Truth?" [Psalms 30:10] Prayers like these are all very special to G'd, so understand, my brother, that if you fear that your prayers and talks are not being heard or even wanted, do not despair. They are really treasured by G'd beyond all of His other joys. No words are ever lost or forgotten -- they are all placed aside and treasured in G'd's great storehouses, stored for a time of need.

If one did not succeed in improving himself more than a single hair's breadth throughout his entire life, then even this would have made his life's struggles and hardships

worthwhile -- for when one comes even the smallest distance closer to G'd in this world, it is on par with attaining thousands upon thousands of miles in the higher spiritual worlds. And all of this land will be a person's to enjoy in the next world for all of eternity. [See The Thirteen Stories of Rabbi Nachman; The Tzaddik Who Was Overcome By Depression.]

20. Conclusion

After having endured great wrestlings and battles to serve G'd [Genesis 30:8] , and after constantly speaking with Him, you will be worthy of coming very near to the Almighty, and of sharing the same level as your righteous brethren, as Rachel declared: "With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed." [Genesis 30:8] Rashi explains that even though it occurred

to Rachel many times to give up -- having thought her words and pleas were not helping, she still persisted, and finally prevailed to hold her own with her sister Leah. [Rashi ibid.] This is true for all those far away from G'd as well, for with enough prayer and yearning, all can reach the level of their pious brethren.

Therefore, my dear brother and friend, you must encourage yourself in prayer and "Divine Conversation" beyond measure. Speak with G'd on every occasion, and beseech Him with heartfelt yearning. Cry to Him to fulfill all of your desires -- for G'd takes great pleasure in the prayers of His people. Be strong at this task and give yourself great encouragement, for seeking G'd is the greatest and the only true pursuit there is. G'd is anxiously awaiting your prayers and conversations, so speak with Him concerning even the smallest and most trivial matters. This holy work will most

certainly bring you to the greatest spiritual joy and ecstasy, and you will merit the experience of the World to Come while yet on this world. Amen, amen.

21. Some Massios and Tales

Rabbi Nachman explained that the stories from tzadikim have tremendous importance and power. By listening to such stories a person's heart will burn to G'd with great fire and enthusiasm. What happens is that the tzadik's influence upon the world is renewed when his stories are told, and this arouses those present to a new inspiration and with new yearning to serve G'd." [Likutei Moharon 234]

Rabbi Nachman said that he himself was instilled with great thirst for G'd in his youth,

since he also heard many such tales. His parents' home was a frequent gathering place for many of the disciples of the Baal Shem Tov as well as for those of the famed Maggid of Mezritch. The disciples would often come to their small town of Mezboz in order to pray at the Baal Shem's grave, and afterward stop in at his home -- which belonged to Rabbi Nachman's parents.

One of the stories which really set Rabbi Nachman's young heart ablaze was the tale of how his great-grandfather, the Baal Shem Tov, first decided to place the yoke of divine service upon himself. He heard the story when he was a young boy -- about five years old, but he took it to heart, and it became one of the great foundations of his life.

It is well known that the Baal Shem Tov was born to his father, Eliezer, who was then one-hundred years old, and to his mother Sarah,

when she was also quite old. She died right after giving birth to the child, and when the boy was a mere five years old, his father became very weak, and called his son over to tell him some last words. "Zol visen az ich darf yetzt avek gain foon der vel't." ("My end is apparently approaching, and I must leave this world, as is the way of life.") My child, do not be afraid of anything at all, because G'd fills the entire world with His glory. Constantly call this to mind, and understand that G'd is always with you and beside you. When you need anything at all, ask it only of G'd Himself And since nothing exists other than G'd, accustom yourself to speak with Him in your own simple way, and always run back to Him if you somehow drift away from following Him."

And it came to pass, that he departed right after speaking these very words. The child went outside and made a big tumult, and so the townspeople came and buried his father.

He was left an orphan -- without father or mother. But his father's last words made a deep impression upon him, and he started to constantly speak with G'd, travelling all around, for he had nobody to watch over him. He would usually find a place to sleep in a shul somewhere, but he would be long gone by the time the day set in. He drifted from town to town and from city to city, walking through fields and forests, too.

He was certainly concerned to follow his father's heeding -- and worked endlessly to realize without a shadow of a doubt how G'd's Presence fills the entire world, and how nothing at all exists other than Him. G'd can be found in every last inch of the universe, and the whole of life's task is merely to speak with Him and come closer to Him. It was just this that the Baal Shem Tov did, fulfilling his father's bidding throughout his whole life.

When Rabbi Nachman heard this story, he yearned to be like his great-grandfather and

live this way. He chose to hide his holy work from the rest of the world -- even from his own father and mother. This is how he started speaking with G'd, and pursuing the ways of total simplicity.

Rabbi Nachman later declared that constant prayer was his greatest manner of coming closer to G'd. He would always appease G'd, that he be made worthy of truly coming close to Him. His simple Yiddish prayers were the most influential of all. He gave G'd all sorts of reasons as proof of his dire need to come closer to Him, and he spent years and years on this.

He would often hide in the attic of his father's house where there was plenty straw and hay. He read lots of Psalms there, and used to cry softly to G'd, begging to be brought even nearer to His Presence.

In addition, he went through every printed prayer and supplication he came across -- there was not one that he did not repeat countless times. He said Psalms, Sharel Tzion, and the prayers printed in the big siddurim, among others, and even those prayers printed in Yiddish. He also said all of the supplications printed after the Malmud -- the entire seven day arrangement in one day! He also had a habit of saying all of the verses in Psalms which beseech G'd, while skipping the others, completing the entire book in one sitting.

Really though, his favorite prayers were those which he made up himself in Yiddish. He was constantly raising havoc with G'd, begging for the merit to truly serve Him. He attributed his greatness to these prayers more than anything else.

There were many times when he would be praying to G'd, and great ideas would come to him -- ideas of how to make his claims even stronger, or on how to become even more inspired from his prayers. He would write them all down, in order to have them around to use again. And so he lived, constantly speaking with G'd, using every appeal imaginable to come closer to Him.

Despite all of his prayers, he imagined that he was not being answered or even being paid attention to. In fact, it seemed to him that he was being pushed away from serving G'd in every conceivable way. -- As if both he and his prayers were being rejected. He saw that the years were passing by, and that he was still just as far from G'd as he was initially. Well, even so, he continued to encourage himself and stood his ground. There were many times when he became depressed from all of this, and stopped speaking with G'd for

a good few days. Afterward though, he would always remind himself of G'd's greatness, and become ashamed of himself for questioning G'd's ways. "For G'd is certainly gracious and merciful, and He surely wants to bring me close to Him." And so, he would return to his prayers and talks with G'd, defeating the Evil Urge time after time.

He was strong at this holy task of hissbodedus, (speaking with G'd), and exalted it above everything else. Simplicity is the essence of these talks, and he later admitted that it was this innocence which helped him attain all of his high levels. He spoke to G'd constantly -- about absolutely everything, and read Psalms without seeking anything except the simple meaning of the text. He once said: "If I would have known that G'd would make me into what I now am, (that is, such a unique tzadik), I would accomplish in one day, that which actually took me an

entire year to achieve." [Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom 154]

He once mentioned that G'd Himself is ultimately simple, and he sought to be a "prastik" more than anything else -- that is, a real simpleton. He would often be found saying "Oui, oui, prastik."

He also spoke with many of the greatest tzadikim and declared that they, too, attained their high levels by being completely plain and simple -- working to serve G'd in total submission and separation from worldly desires. How happy they are.

If many years pass by, and it still seems that your talks and prayers are not helping you, don't worry. Rabbi Nachman assured us that even this is no excuse for despair. He explained that all of a person's conversations with G'd are really making a big impression above, and he compared hissbodedus to

water dripping on a rock. The water doesn't seem to stand a chance against the rock, but in truth this really isn't so. After a time, the water will cause an impression and even pierce a hole through it. Prayer causes the same thing. Even if a person has a heart of stone, his prayers will eventually penetrate his heart, bringing him to even the highest of levels. [Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom 234]

Rabbi Nachman spoke of how wonderful it is to talk out your whole heart and mind with G'd and to place your burden upon Him. Animate your conversations with tears and pleas for mercy, just like an erring son approaching his father. This is more than an analogy, since G'd has actually called us His children, as the verse says: "You are children to the L'rd, your G'd." [Deuteronomy 14:1]

G'd calls us His children even if we do not deserve to be, and were He to disown you as

His son, He would be doing what is right in "His own eyes," but you would still have to live up to your role and continue to be His son. Yet, it is better to arouse yourself with yearning and fervor for G'd, and return to Him in repentance. Work yourself to tears, scream and cry before your Father.

Rabbi Nachman said that it would be truly great to have hisbodedus in such full hearted devotion as to become inspired to cry like a child before his father. If you are constantly urging yourself to cry though, it is not good. Such thoughts will actually distract you from praying with a full heart.

When praying to G'd, you have to separate yourself from all irrelevant thoughts. Concentrate on the words you are saying, and on nothing else. This will certainly bring you to great tears.

All outside thoughts will only harm your hissbodeduseven those pressing you to cry, for they keep you from hearing your own words.

If you are actually worthy of crying during your conversations -- very good. If not though -- do not worry or let this distract you from your talks with G'd.

The Rebbe also mentioned another idea concerning hissbodedus. it was his habit to speak with G'd every single day without fail, and he said that even if you can't seem to speak, or cannot find, more than a single expression, you should encourage your@elf in this too, and repeat it over and over again - - for days and weeks on end, if necessary. Encourage yourself to keep up this talk, for a single word is also a good thing and G'd will eventually fill your tongue with beautiful words.

Rabbi Nachman said that such holy conversation has awesome power -- enough power to render a loaded gun useless. Understand this well, for it contains many deep secrets.

After he mentioned this, he then continued on at great length about hissbodedus. He explained its tremendous importance from many different points of view, and instructed his disciples to be constantly at work on this holy task. He said that he really wanted people to spend the entire day speaking with G'd and yearning for Him, but that everyone cannot hold such a high level. Therefore, he told his disciples to dedicate at least one hour a day for this divine conversation, this also being very good. He continued: ". . . But those with strong hearts, who really yearn to take the yoke of divine service upon themselves, should spend the whole day in hissbodedus." [Likutei Moharon II; 96] He then brought a proof for his words from the Talmud. "If only

a person would spend his entire day in prayer." [Tractate Berachos 21]

He also mentioned that the most sublime hissbodedus is one in which the soul comes close to actually leaving the body holding on by no more than a hair's breadth. Your conversations will take you to the highest planes of consciousness, and the secret is to speak your heart with real feeling and to share all the small points and details as well. This is what the sages said: "A person's prayers will not be answered unless he places h's soul in his palm." [Tractate Taanis 5] -- That is, he should pray w'th such burning thirst, that his soul be on the verge of expiring. Rabbi Nachman mentioned that when one merits G'd's help, this holy conversation can be as one between two close friends.

He said that this divine conversation has the power to thoroughly inspire a person. The words themselves will open your heart and arouse you to yearn for G'd. King Solomon writes in Song of Songs: "My soul failed when He spoke." [Song of Songs 5:6] Your heart and soul will also pant and pine away for G'd, because the mere words contain this amazing power.

Rabbi Nachman was once speaking with a young boy, encouraging him to speak with G'd in a personal way, as he was wont to do. He told him that this was the most important form of prayer, tracing back to ancient times. In the beginning, everyone would pray to G'd in their own familiar way, as mentioned by the Rambam. [Rambam; Hilchos Tefila, Ch. 1] When the Jews were later dispersed in the exile, Hebrew became uncertain, and the people did not pray with wholehearted feeling. The Men of the Great Assembly

noticed this, and realized the need to set up a fixed order of prayer. These are now the central prayers according to Jewish Law, but if people would say their own personal prayers as well, they would rise above even their previous piety. You see, a person's own heartfelt desires and hopes make the greatest prayers of all.

The Rebbe told his disciples to have a lot of these holy conversations, so they could understand their true goals and purpose in the world. Another reason is that these talks will inspire a person to constantly seek G'd's mercy and beg to come close to Him. He said that this is how King David wrote the Book of Psalms. The Rebbe also mentioned that he had his reatest talks with G'd while underneath the covers, after laying down to sleep. He would talk on and on before G'd, pouring out his whole heart, as he says in Psalms; "I speak every night upon my bed."

[Psalms 6:7] I Happy are all those who constantly fulfill this holy custom -- for it is greater than all else. [Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom 275]

Rabbi Nachman had a room to himself in town, and he could sit there undisturbed, but he usually went out to the fields and forests where he would have lots of hissbodedus.

Rabbi Nosan once went with him, and they left from Medvordika. (This is where the Rebbe lived in his earlier years). They wandered all around, passing a lot of fields and mountains. The Rebbe told him that he had been through all of these mountains and fields which were surrounding the city. He said he had gone through all of them many, many times, walking and conversing with G'd.

He continued on, telling him that on top of one of the mountains there was a sort of

underground cave where he went countless times to have hisbodedus. This was all in addition to the hisbodedus he had in his home. His lifestyle was the same while he was still living in Mezboz, and afterward too, when he moved to Z'latefali and to Breslov. He would spend a lot of time in hisbodedus every day, sometimes dedicating the entire day to his prayers.

One of the Rebbe's disciples from Z'latefali told this story which took place while the Rebbe was still living there.

One summer morning, the Rebbe prayed Shachris early, and sent his daughter Sarah to call him. So she called him and he came to the Rebbe. He said; "Come with me for a walk," so they left, and 'ourneyed away from the city. They came to the fields of reed grass and underbrush. The Rebbe told him, "If you are worthy of hearing all the songs and praises of

the grasses -- how every single blade sings its song to G'd, all without any impure motive or thought, seeking no reward or kindness, then you know how beautiful and pleasing their songs are, and how great it is to be among them. Their songs will inspire you to serve G'd in wondrous awe."

They hiked onward, and came to a sort of cave. His d'Ischle asked him what it was, so the Rebbe explained and motioned him to follow as they went inside. They could not be seen from the outside, since the opening was on top. The Rebbe sat on the ground, removed a copy of Sharei Tzion from his pocket and started saying the prayers while crying and sobbing profusely. He continued like this -- page after page.

His disciple stood nearby in total amazement, watching the Rebbe cry on and on. When he finally stopped crying, he told his disciple to go outside and see how late it was. He was shocked to see that the sun had already

begun to set! He was astonished in seeing the Rebbe's great strength to cry the whole day through.

Afterwards, the Rebbe told him to light his pipe, and he smoked it. They sat awhile and then went outside. The Rebbe told him there will be a time when it will be very difficult to draw close to me -- but now I'm in your hands. And if you want, I can make a tzadik out of you as great as myself!"

When Rabbi Nachman was in the city of Uman -- about half a year before his passing, he was already on a level higher than anything imaginable. Yet, even so, there in Uman he continued to have a lot of nissbodedus.

One time, his landlord came in unexpectedly, and the Rebbe was stretched out across the floor, crying to G'd. The Rebbe was incredibly sick then -- in fact, his very existence was a

miracle! Yet, he held on to his simple ways of serving G'd even under such terrible duress. He remained a "prastik" until the final moments of his life, when he ascended in peace to the highest heights of the heavens. Happy is he.

22. Letters From Asher B'Nachal

Written by Rabbi Eliezer Shlomo Schick,
famous Breslover leader,
Rosh Yeshiva, and author of over seventy
books.

Friday, Erev Shabbos-
Parshos Emor, 1972

May peace and blessings be upon you, my
special friend;

I've already written to you at great length,
encouraging you to study the words of truth

of the Rebbe, and to learn Torah the Way he himself instructed us.

My beautiful friend, be strong and confident in life -- and most important of all are to constantly be happy and enthusiastic. The impure forces which entice a person to sin get their main foothold when one is sad and bitter. The specific demon in charge of this is "Lilith" (Yallah in Hebrew), as is well known, and she can cause terrible harm if given the chance, G'd forbid. You must therefore make yourself happy and joyous -- no matter what it takes to do so.

The easiest and outstanding way to do this is as Rabbi Nachman revealed. (See Likutel Moharon 282). Seek out good qualities in yourself, irrelevant of how fallen you may feel you are. Every single Jew has many good deeds to his name: honoring parents; giving charity; laying tefillin; keeping Shabbos; etc., etc. -- mitzvos he repeatedly fulfills with each and every day. Even if these good points are

mixed with a lot of imperfection and ulterior motives, the good can still be easily found in them. By calling these deeds to mind, you can bring yourself to tremendous joy.

Don't worry about the lack of challenge in this. G'd has tremendous mercy on every person -- especially on those who have stumbled into sexual impurity. He deals with these people very leniently, in order to encourage them to return to the ways of holiness.

If these souls who have fallen to such evil take pity upon themselves by following Rabbi Nachman's advice, then there is no telling what great miracles might occur. The most essential advice is to find a nice secluded spot somewhere -- far away from where people go. There, you can be alone with G'd and speak out your whole heart with Him. Mention all of the sins and failures you've allowed to happen, as well as everything else. There is no limit to what may occur with

one's prayers and talks once they reach the higher worlds.

By seeking G'd in this way, you can merit the tremendous gift of entering the fantastic spiritual palace high above. From there, three hundred and seventy-five lights shine forth, corresponding with the numerical value of the Hebrew word for time (shah). It's a place to which even the perfectly righteous are not allowed entry. This palace is specially reserved for those who once stumbled and fell to the terrible sin of [not guarding the covenant], may G'd take pity.

When any of these people have mercy upon themselves and approach G'd with prayer and conversation, then "Ezriel" the angel in charge of this palace gathers all of their prayers and tears together and builds new rooms and houses from them in this amazing palace. He constructs them in a way to enable all the various rooms to benefit from the three hundred and seventy-five lights.

Therefore, my precious brother, look and behold the greatness and profound pleasure which will shine forth upon you if you run right now to a nice secluded place in order to speak with G'd, and to share your entire heart and troubles with Him. Ask and beseech G'd to forgive you of the past. There is no telling what will happen with such yearnings and hopes up above.

The reason that you don't see any of this now is due to the necessity of free choice. If you were to see how the angel "Ezriel" constructs such awesome structures, there would be no room for free choice -- for everyone would run to beseech G'd's forgiveness upon seeing such wonders. It must therefore remain hidden from a person even after many such experiences.

But beware -- "A corresponding opposition has G'd Created," and there is likewise a realm in hell down below known as the "well of destruction." This is a place specifically for

those who have succumbed to evil and purposely wasted their seed, may G'd's mercy spare us. The "officer" in charge here is the evil "Lilith." Her job is to terrorize these fallen souls. Her instruments of torture are depression, bitterness, and confusion. She drugs her victims with a lack of confidence and self-despair-brainwashing them to think and feel they are beyond hope and have already been sentenced to eternal damnation.

If a person falls to be on guard against the nets which she mercilessly throws at their feet, and listens to her cruel words, then he will fall farther and farther into this tragic sin -- for one sin leads to another, and one blemish brings a second one in its turn. These additional mistakes will cause a person to fall deeper and deeper to this "well of destruction" -- a place of increasingly thicker darkness.

If G'd had not taken pity upon us by sending Rabbi Nachman, we would all be long gone by

now -- swallowed up in the tremendous darkness now rampant in the world. The Rebbe made himself a security to G'd -- a guarantor that this sin would be corrected and abolished.

This diabolical force continues to lead the people of the world deeper and deeper into sin -- especially the youth, and Rabbi Nachman was therefore constantly adhering us on prayer and on having much secluded conversation with G'd. It is impossible to leave such a dark, deep pit without first having lots and lots of talks and prayers to G'd. Pouring your heart out to G'd must become almost "second nature."

This is related to the hour of such divine conversation which Rabbi Nachman advised us to have each day. The one hour (shah) corresponds with the three hundred and seventyfive (shah) lights which emanate from the "palace" mentioned before. If you accustom yourself to escape to a special place

to speak with G'd and to pour out your heart to Him everyday, then you will eventually become worthy of ascending from all of the places you fell to, and change all of your sins and mistakes to merits, and all of your failings to outstanding qualities.

Actually, this is the main conflict between the Evil and the Good Inclinations. The Evil Inclination looks to lure a person to the depths of the nether world by constantly seeking to discourage him. He paints a dismal picture -- attempting to make one's entire life appear hopeless, and the person forever trapped in his present plight. He says: "Why pray and beseech G'd for help? -- You've already seen long stretches of time pass by without experiencing any change for the better." The Satan may seek your harm in other ways as well -- by attempting to convince you of your unworthiness for this holy path, claiming it is only for the great

tzadikim who never tasted the bitterness of sin or by presenting other such arguments.

If a person foolishly ignores this warning -- failing to Protect himself against this blatant evil, then he may fall to the Satan's very hands, G'd forbid -- and stumble deeper and deeper into this bottomless pit.

Just the opposite though, are the ways of the Good Inclination, who enlightens a person to chase after G'dliness. G'd's mercy is upon all of His creations -- especially upon those whose hearts are destroyed and He takes great pity upon them. Their prayers are heard and accepted before even those of the great tzadikim, as revealed in the holy Zohar. Look there, (in the Zohar, Parshos Balak), and realize how the prayers of the afflicted and despised rise way, way above the prayers of even Moses and David.

The sages revealed: "G'd says, 'When I behold people praying who are without any Torah or good deeds -- I accept them nonetheless'."

Therefore, those with sense and who desire the truth will realize the advantage of Joining forces with the Good Inclination -- especially concerning a matter such as this which is so sweet and simple. Prayer and conversation with G'd will bring you to the highest of levels.

Hold a conversation with G'd even if your heart is not there, and your thoughts are far, far away from your words. Rabbi Nachman encouraged us on this very much. No matter where you are in the world, it is of the essence to at least pronounce the words of such conversation. Say the words truthfully and reveal your sins to G'd in great detail. By means of such conversation, great light will shine upon you and dwell within you. (See Likutel Moharon 9)

You will soon be worthy of leaving the terrible darkness to which you stumbled, and the three hundred and seventy-five lights of which we spoke earlier will all glow and shine from within you.

This hour of divine conversation that the Rebbe instructed us on reminds me of something I heard from some other Breslover Chassidim. As is known, the specified time for salting meat is one hour, (in order to remove all traces of blood -- a prohibited food, restricted by the Torah). If there is a rush though, twenty minutes will suffice. Likewise, they say, is this hour of hissbodedus (divine conversation). The explanation is as follows. During hissbodedus, a person receives advice and ideas from above, which is connected to the law of salting meat, for such advice is as salt -- drawing away the "bad blood" which a person somehow absorbed. The time Rabbi Nachman specified for hissbodedus is one full hour. If, however, a person cannot fill an

entire hour, he should at least converse with G'd for twenty minutes.

I have seen and heard of many chassidim who divide the "hour" to separate sessions of twenty minutes each. Happy are all those who hold by this. However, how ecstatically happy are all those who overcome themselves, and pour out their hearts before G'd every single day for at least a consecutive full hour.

It is needless to go on with more praise for this most holy of practices -- for there are no words adequate to express its greatness. What must be said though, is that it is essential to discard one's own faulty reasoning -- irrelevant of what direction it might be leading him, and to oblige Rabbi Nachman, who pleaded with us and adhered us to follow this sensational and easy task of pouring out one's heart before G'd in a nice, secluded place.

I'm sure you are aware of the 'Tikun HaClolli' which Rabbi Nachman revealed. This arrangement of Psalms which he revealed is a complete correction for sexual blemishes and misdeeds. The Rebbe adhered us ever so much concerning these Psalms, and even testified with two witnesses that whoever would come to his grave and say these ten Psalms there would be guaranteed his utmost devotion and help'f the person's sins and crimes be exceedingly great. He even declared that he would work and struggle to do everything in his power to save and assist that person. He even promised to lift the person by his sidecurls from the depths of hell if necessary.

He said all of this concerning one who merits to journey to his holy grave (in Uman, Russia). However, those who have not gone there should also be careful to say these Psalms in whatever place they may be.

These Psalms (16, 32, 41, 42, 59, 77, 90, 105, 137, 150) have tremendous divine force and power to correct sexual as well as all other types of problems and difficulties. When said in the order which Rabbi Nachman revealed (their normal ascending arrangement), they contain unfathomable divine energy and secrets which mortal man cannot even hope to grasp.

Rabbi Nachman explained that even though this 'Tikun' is so incredibly simple (-- to merely say the ten Psalms), the Evil Urge would attempt to dissuade a person from believing in them and from saying them nonetheless.

Therefore, my precious brother, take heed and have pity upon yourself. Make sure to destroy all of the obstacles which present themselves against this holy practice, and say these ten Psalms each and every day.

Rabbi Nachman said that immediately after reciting these ten Psalms a person need not worry at all -- for the sin (of having lost one's seed) will have certainly been completely corrected. By saying the 'Tikun,' a person becomes united with Rabbi Nachman's own soul, and need not worry in the least -- even if he is still in the midst of battle with the Evil Urge, frantically fighting off passions and bad traits.

By means of this 'Universal Tikun,' one will be well armored against additional attacks from "the Other Side." No new arrows of lust will be able to penetrate his soul. (See Rabbi Nachman's story of The Seven Beggars; especially the tale of the sixth day). These Psalms have incredible strength, and one will merit to remove the existing "arrows" as well thereby raising one's entire consciousness and being up to the realm of Eternity -- a place in complete harmony with G'd's sublime Presence.

There is absolutely no level in the entire world which a person will not be able to reach if he merely follows Rabb' Nachman's advice. This is specifically true regarding the ten Psalms -- for by regularly saying them, one will be of Rabbi Nachman's own disciples, attaining as well, the merit of being a man who sits on the Throne" -- rising further and further toward Eternity, until Isalah's prophecy be fulfilled in him: "He will destroy death forever, and the L'rd G'd will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall He take away from off all the earth -- for the L'rd has spoken it. " (Isaiah 25:8)

The worst abuse is a breach of the Covenant (disregarding the sanctity of the sexual function whose purpose is specifically for procreation). Such abuse embitters a person's soul to tragic proportions -- bringing him to a closer and closer relationship with "the Side of Death," may G'd's mercy spare us.

brook, the fountain of wisdom." May your candle shine brightly forth.

I received your letter and money to help us print more books -- may much good be granted to you for this.

My precious friend, the essence is to renew your simple faith in the fact that G'd rules the world with truly wondrous Divine Providence. There is absolutely no "nature" whatsoever! Everything occurs through precise calculations. The people you happen to meet, talk to, or work with today are all determined from above through G'd's awesome Providence.

If a person is strong in this belief, then he will never think about why this friend doesn't want to be with him or why that one snubbed him -- everything is arranged by the Almighty. if it is G'd's Will for you to meet a certain Person, all sorts of occurrences will take place in order for you to meet him.

So, my special friend, merely strengthen yourself further and further, for "great is our Master, and quick with salvation.

Sincerely,

Wednesday,

Parshos Hukos/Balak, 1979

May joy and gladness reach after you, the precious love of my soul.

You are constantly asking me to write you a letter, but the truth of the matter is that this remains terribly difficult for me -- especially since you are right here. However, due to my great love for you, my heart directs me to at least write you these small fragments.

No ifs, ands or buts about it -- you must not indulge yourself in senseless worry or anxiety. This is all the more true concerning worry over what tomorrow may bring. If you take this advice to heart, and become

accustomed to keeping it, then you will even merit to "perceive your (heavenly) world while yet alive."

Turn your heart to heaven and remain strong concerning the fixed prayers: Shachris, Mincha, Maariv, and Hatzos (the morning, afternoon, evening, and midnight prayers). Encourage yourself to at least say the midnight prayers every night -- even if it be the Psalms by themselves when the entire service seems too hard for you. (The ten Psalms of the Midnight Lament are: 137, 79, 42, 43, 24, 20, 67, 111, 51, and 126). More important though, is to arouse yourself to tears then, if you can -- for nothing is greater than crying at midnight, since all of the heavenly gates are then open.

You must also be strong to establish specific times for learning Torah: Taanach (Bible); Mishnah; Talmud; Legends; The Codes of Law, and of course Rabbi Nachman's teachings -- and then all will be well with you.

Bear in mind though, that a little is also good. The main thing is that you be filled with Joy over the sweetness of your portion in life and in Torah -- especially since you are counted among the disciples of the greatest rebbe of all -- Rabbi Nachman. Therefore, see to it to dance every day from sheer joy -- even if it be between you and yourself!

Also, don't let anyone hinder or confuse you - - regardless of who he might be.

How good and how pleasing if you're able to learn a section of Likutel Moharan every day and to say the corresponding prayers from Likutel Tefilos -- for this has tremendous power to purify the soul.

May the Almighty grant me the undeserved merits of completing my commentary "S'fas HaNachal" on Likutel Moharon and enable us to publish and distribute it throughout every corner of the globe. So please, in your

hissbodedus to the Almighty, see to also ask of Him concerning this.

Sincerely,

The Divine Conversation was written by [Rabbi Eleazer Shlomo Shick](#), shlit"a renowned Breslover leader, Rosh Yeshiva, and author of over seventy books, all based on the teachings of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov zy"e

If You would like extra copies of this book, just send us whatever You can afford -- in order to help cover printing and shipping costs.

We also have many other Breslov publications, however, most are in Hebrew.

Donations would also be most welcome, to say the least. The Yeshiva is involved in many different programs -- all with the goals of spreading the teachings of Orthodox Judaism,

and Breslov Chassidus, in particular, to the Jewish people.

Feel free to write if you have any questions or just want to share your thoughts or problems.

Most of all though, keep praying to G'd.

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