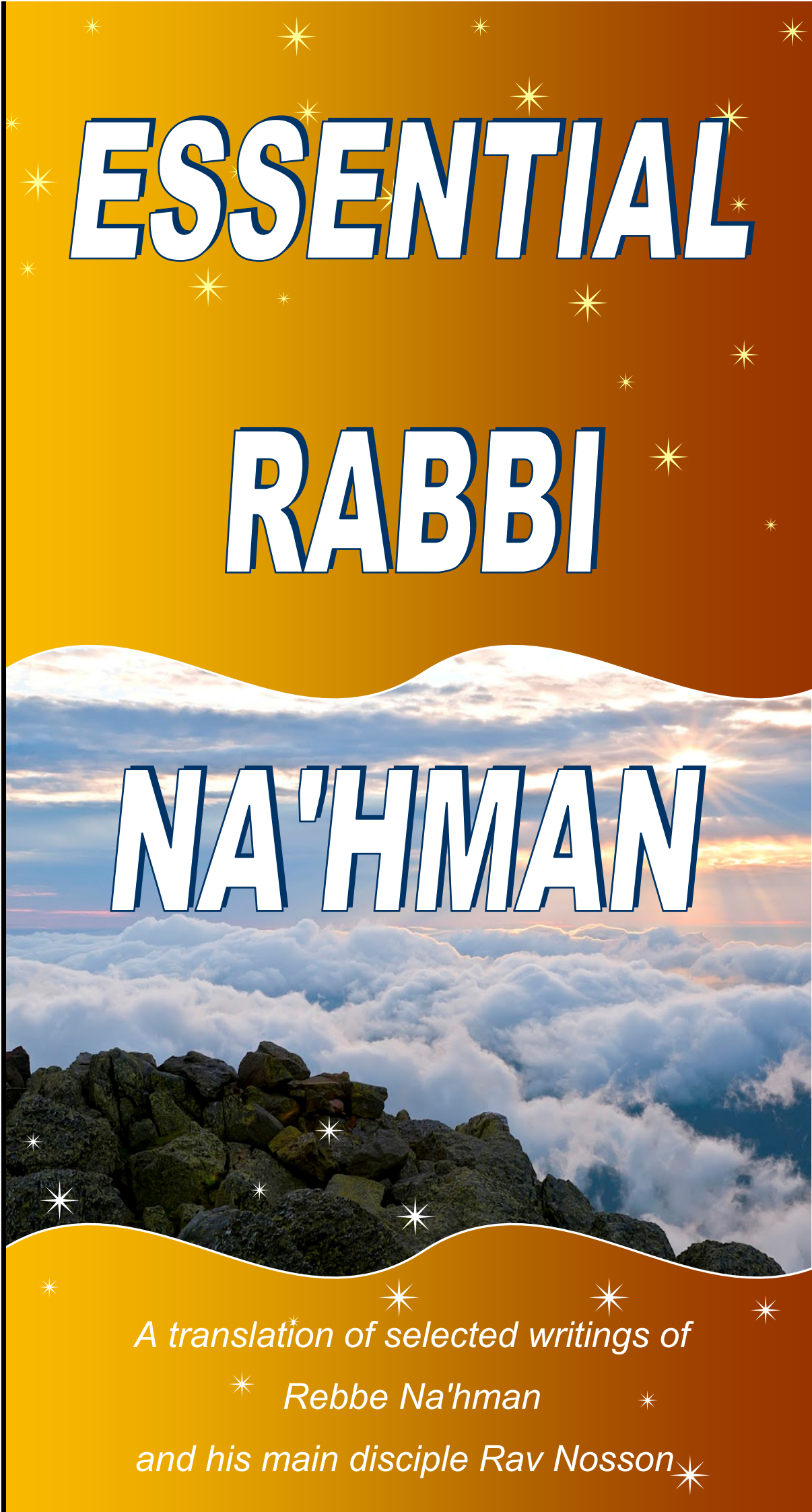


ESSENTIAL

RABBI

NA'HMAN

*A translation of selected writings of
Rebbe Na'hman
and his main disciple Rav Nosson*





I


THE LIFE OF RABBI NACHMAN He was the true "live man," the like of whom there has never been. At all times he was truly alive. His life was always new life. There are countless gradations in the life and vitality found in the world. Real life is the life of true wisdom, and the essence of wisdom is to labor and endeavor to know and acknowledge God, Who is the Life of life. The closer one comes to God, the more one's life is genuine life. The righteous are constantly attached to true life. But the life which the Rebbe himself achieved was on an altogether higher, more exalted plane, the like of which no man has ever tasted. Because the Rebbe had long life, the truly good life. Chayey Moharan, Introduction.

II

RABBI NACHMAN'S SONG OF DELIGHT In praise of the Torah of Moses No other beliefs and customs compare with our faith. Their wise men invented customs using human reason. Moses ascended on high garbed in a cloud. The Necessary Existent spoke with him each time, so he distanced himself from woman. Despised, sickly and oppressed though we are, We received a good teaching from him - God's wisdom, which comes forth from nothingness. Moses - king in Yeshurun - and our faith are like two inseparable brothers. Neither his soul nor his pure body deviated from one another.

ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS As numerous as their souls, so are their many opinions and diverse arguments. Their forms of worship are new, having arisen only recently. Their thoughts are not our thoughts, and our ways are not their ways. Our souls are one: we do not turn aside to their many images.

The power of the soul My strong, wise soul: Why have you not taken pity on yourself? Why have you forgotten the Craftsman who raised you, Who has fed you sweet dainties and clothed you in purple? Now you are trampled by the flock




and under the feet of gross worldly desires. You are bare and naked. Your festive wine has turned into a cup of tears. Be strong! Renew your strength. Don't be like a great elephant or camel that even when pulled along by the nose by a mouse will still not kick free, only through folly since he doesn't know his own strength.

But you, my wise, strong soul: What will you do on the day of reckoning and what will you answer the One Who sent you on your mission? Don't look for fleeting pleasures, for your body is frail and lowly, while time roars ahead, and this could be your body's last day. Pierce your heart of stone and shine from there to me with a little glimpse of your face, which is bright as the sun, beautiful as the moon. Don't be still and silent! Raise your sweet voice in songs and thanks. Open your mouth and bring forth your pleasant words before the Holy One blessed be He. Raise your eyes on high and remember your ancient love.

God's glory in nature Rivers, streams, channels of abundant waters, and seas great and small, Wondrous, diverse in colors, tastes and characters, Swarming with creatures small and great - each one contains species without number. All laud and praise God with all their limbs. They constantly utter words and never deny their Ruler. Precious jewels and pearls glint in their depths: Hidden within them are the lights of their vessels.

Destiny of the soul The souls hewn from beneath the Throne of Glory Pine constantly to become one with their Source. The soul draws life and kindness from the kindnesses of David. She has not lost the grace of the spirit dripping from Eden 's garden. Palatial dwellings and tents of peace are marked out for each and every soul with signs of majesty. "What has God done?" the angels will ask, racing on their missions like shooting stars. Far remote from all delights will be those whose paths are corrupted.

They will be left hungry and disgraced with only the hollow of the sling as their lot. Let us not be lost! Let us return to God!



Let us accept bad and good with love and bedeck ourselves in honor of our eternal Father.

The holy land The earth was created surrounded by spheres, with many lands and states around it. The children of man all have their languages and beliefs. The buds, flowers and fruits of the earth And even the collapse of states are through her winds. The earth alone endures, with the spheres encompassing around her.

Torah protects from impurity Demons and spirits fly through the air, Hearing God's decree and holding sway over the four root kinds of damage: the ox, the pit, the tooth and fire. In three ways like angels, in three like men, They flee in the face of the holy Covenant, of which it is said, "He shall surely be circumcised". Striking as if with rods in their weird forms, Spell-weavers and magicians compel them by adjuring them with names. But the holy Torah protects us from all impurities; Charity saves from terrible deaths.

The suffering of exile Prophecy we do not have.

With the teeth of the nations gnashing against the unique people, we are bereft of understanding. They discuss how to administer the bitter cup of sorrows. We shall bear their yoke until the Poor One arrives.

Mashiach The son shall explore his father's treasures. With a crown of glory the beloved son is crowned. Then we shall sing a new song. Our King! Each and every one will point with a finger of flesh. The Torah will be unforgettably sealed in each one's heart. Death will be consumed for ever like the fading scent of incense.

Spiritual healing Let us acquire a heart of wisdom to understand the design of our body, the proportions of its joints and the structure of its limbs. This necessary understanding helps us to know the Creator Who formed all these creations, Who heals all sickness and each one's pains - the blind and the lame, the leprous and afflicted, he who worries and he who is in pain. Let us eat only to sustain our souls, restraining our natural cravings. Chazak!!! Be strong!!!



III

THE UNIQUE CHARM OF RABBI NACHMAN The world needs me very much indeed. Without me, the world cannot exist at all. You yourself know how much you need me. All the Tzaddikim also need me, because they too need to improve. Even the nations of the world need me. I could draw the gentiles to God and bring them closer to the faith of Israel. However: "Enough for the servant to be like his Master" (Berachot 58b) . Chayey Moharan #248, 250-1

IV

I am a river that cleanses from all stains. I am a most beautiful, most amazing tree with most amazing branches. And down below, I am literally under the ground. I am a wonder, and my soul is very wondrous. I am the elder of elders. I am the holy elder, who reveals things which the Ancient of Days concealed. Chayey Moharan #245, 256, 272, 289, 332

V

I will lead you on a new path which no man has ever traveled before. It is really a very old path, and yet it is completely new. Tovot Zichronot p. 107

In time to come, I will sing a song which will be the world to come of all the Tzaddikim and Chassidim. Chayey Moharan #267

My teachings and conversations are not only for you, but for "those who are here.... and for those who are not here" - the future generations (Deuteronomy 29:14; Rashi ad loc.) . You must also teach your children all the lessons and ideas and stories that I have revealed to you. "And you shall make them known to your children and your children's children!" (ibid. 4:9) . Sichot Haran #209

I can turn a person into a good Jew and make him just like me! Literally!!! Chayey Moharan #230


VI

My mission is a secret. It is such a secret that even when I reveal the secret, it still remains a secret. Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-54

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, author of the Zohar , was unique, as everyone knows. From the time of Rabbi Shimon until the ARI (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria 1534-72) , there were no new revelations like Rabbi Shimon's. Only the ARI revealed entirely new and original teachings which no-one could reveal until his time. After the Ari, no new teachings were revealed until the coming of the Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760) , who was also totally unique and who revealed completely new teachings. From the time of the Baal Shem Tov until today there have been no new revelations on such a level. Until now, the world has been sustained only by the revelations of the Baal Shem Tov. Then I came along!!! And now I am starting to reveal totally awesome, exalted, original teachings. Chayey Moharan #279

I know wisdom that cannot be revealed. If I were to begin to reveal this wisdom, people would be nourished by the sheer delight of understanding it. They would no longer eat or drink. Every soul would long to hear this wisdom and the whole world would grind to a halt. People would leave their present lives in search of the sweet beauty of this wisdom. But I cannot reveal this wisdom to mankind. Sichot Haran #181

The song and dance of my Torahs As yet the world has not had the least taste of me. Were they only to hear one of my lessons with its true melody and dance, they would pass into a state of complete surrender. I mean the whole world - even the animals and plants! Everything in existence would be nullified. Their very souls would expire from overwhelming delight. Think of the power of music and dance. Someone who truly understands music can play melodies that spring from its very essence and have the power to draw the very soul of the listener after their every nuance. The listener becomes totally subordinate to the melody, surrendering himself to its drawing power. The melody penetrates and arouses him, drawing him



along with it. This is even more so with dance. A real dancer can dance in such a way that his body expresses every subtle shade of the music he is dancing to. Every limb of his body moves in perfect unison with the music. Sometimes the music calls for a movement of the head, the legs or the arms. It may call for the dancer to bend down or swing around. The movements of the body must be in perfect harmony with the music. Now think of a melody with words. In a perfect song, the words are connected to the melody in every detail. The song expresses in words exactly what the music expresses through the beauty of the melody. Now add the element of dance: the dance expresses in terms of bodily movement what the words and music express in their terms. Everything works in complete harmony. When the words, melody and dance are all interrelated and interwoven in perfect unity, anyone who experiences them will be so overwhelmed with delight that his soul will literally expire and he will fall into a state of complete surrender. This is the greatest of all pleasures. Anyone who hasn't tasted this knows nothing of pleasure. Those present when such a player sings and dances are powerless: they simply expire with yearning and delight. The closer a person is to the melody and dance and the deeper his understanding, the more the movements of the music and dance will come naturally because of the drawing power of the delight they cause. His pleasure at the music and dance draws him in and takes over. He quite spontaneously starts moving, singing and dancing. Likewise, the closer someone is to my teachings, the more natural and easy will the movements of their holy song and dance become. Happy is the eye that sees this, for even in the next world, not everyone will be worthy of hearing and seeing this. "Only those who labor on the eve of Shabbat will eat on Shabbat." Chayey Moharan #340

When somebody thinks of me they become like a newborn babe. Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-17

שבת שלום

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