



# Get Well Soon

Offering strength, hope, and cheer to  
the ill and despondent; with a beautiful  
prayer appended.

Written by the holy tzaddik

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BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF

**RABBI NACHMAN OF BRESLOV**

AND OF HIS STUDENT

**RABBI NOSSON OF BRESLOV**



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# Get Well Soon



## 1.

My dear fellow-Jew, now that you have fallen ill and you are forced to lie in bed inactive, you have the opportunity to ask yourself: What is my purpose here in this world? Perhaps the reason that you fell ill was precisely so that you would have the time and desire to ask this basic question about your life.

When a person is healthy he runs from task to task, and he never pauses to consider: Who am I? Why was I born? What is my role? Now that you are ill, however, you are forced to rest, and you are left alone for long periods of time.

Now you have the opportunity to investigate the meaning of your life. Review your life until now. Examine both your failures and your successes. Then make the resolution for the future – decide how you will act to avoid further failures and problems, and to instead succeed in all areas of your life.

## 2.

Although you are lying on your sickbed alone, in reality you are *not* alone. Our Sages have said, "G-d's presence hovers above the headrest of a sick person. And the psalm tells us, 'G-d will sustain a person upon his sickbed' (Ps. 41)" (Shabbat 12b). So, do not be frightened or downhearted. After all, G-d is very near. If you are strong and do not grow discouraged, you will undoubtedly recover.

Usually, when a person falls ill, he becomes despondent and imagines that he will never leave his sickbed. However, this is a great mistake. Even if a doctor tells you explicitly that you have no hope of recovery, laugh off his prediction.

Our Sages tell us that when Isaiah told Hezekiah the king, "Declare your final will to your household, for you will soon die," Hezekiah replied, "Leave me; for even if a sharp sword is suspended over a person's neck, he shouldn't despair of G-d's mercy." And so it was, for Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and cried to G-d, and G-d gave him many more years of life (Ber. 10a).

Here you see that even a prophet like Isaiah tells a person that he is going to die, that person shouldn't listen, because prayer to G-d

can reverse a decree and turn everything to the good. How much more is this true if not a prophet but simply a doctor makes a negative prognosis. Reject his predictions and laugh at them. Our Sages have stated "From the verse, 'And he will surely heal' (Ex. 21), we homiletically learn – applying these words to a human doctor – that a doctor is given permission by G-d to heal you – not, however, to give up on you" (Ber. 60a).

Surely if the doctor assures you that you will recover, you should really be happy – and this itself will help you get well, because cheerfulness is the best medicine.

### 3.

The best medicine is happiness, the more cheerful you are, the quicker will be your recovery. When you are in a good frame of

mind, you digest your food better, you rest better, and you strengthen your body's resources to overcome illness. When a person is not in a good frame of mind, however, he is prone to disease. Physicians have long agreed that the causes of disease are primarily emotional and mental (see Likutei Moharan II 24).

Always be cheerful, so as to never become ill. But even now that you are in the hospital, work hard to cheer yourself up. In that way, you will hasten your recovery.

Smile at others; tell others and yourself, "Things are going to be alright"; help the other patients. This will aid you a great deal.

It is true that you yourself are suffering. But your troubles are not forever – soon they will pass, and you will be healthy.

Therefore, at least act as though you are joyful; at least force yourself to smile. Instead of groaning, say. "Thank you, G-d, for the good You have given me"; "G-d, please heal me and I will return to You with all my heart." Also, help the people around you.

By acting this way, you will hasten your recovery. If a person becomes morose and despondent, abandons hope and imagines that he will never leave the hospital, he himself is making himself sick. But when you strengthen yourself and cheer yourself up, you pave the road to your complete recovery.

#### 4.

Always strengthen yourself. Look into your life, examine your acts, and investigate why you came to be sick.



Really, there is no existence independent from G-d, and everything is up to Him – "a person can't even stub his finger here below unless it was decreed in heaven" (Chulin 7a). How much more is every detail supervised and directed by G-d when a person has to take to his bed, go to the hospital or undergo a serious operation.

Therefore, now that you are lying on your sickbed, examine your life. Try to see where you may have acted wrongly, and resolve to improve yourself, to fix whatever wrong you have done, and to return to G-d wholeheartedly. Decide that from now on you will turn over a new leaf. Then you will certainly recover.

Things will really approve if in addition you begin to pray to G-d. Your words will be

acceptable to Him since, as our Sages have said, "The most acceptable prayers for a person's recovery are those of the sick person himself" (Midrash Rabbah, Vayeirah).

When a person is seriously ill, his spirit is broken and pours his heart out to everyone who comes to visit him. So why don't you tell your pains and troubles to G-d? G-d is at this moment with you; He is sustaining you. Now that you are on your sickbed, it is easy for you to realize the fragility of life and that a person's existence and health are dependent on the will of G-d. Therefore, turn to G-d and pour your heart out to Him; tell Him all that you have gone through and all that you are now suffering; plead with Him to heal you and rescue you from your sufferings.

Then you will undoubtedly open the door to a complete recovery. In essence, illness is caused by a person's wrong acts, which themselves came about due to a lack of awareness of G-d. But as soon as a sick person begins to speak to G-d, his awareness of G-d and his faith in G-d are strengthened, and then he can attain a complete recovery.

## 5.

Your life or death (G-d forbid) are in your hands. Your fate depends upon your actions.

How can you ensure your recovery and departure from the hospital? You must strengthen yourself. Despite all your pains, you must cheer yourself up and fill yourself with a spirit of life. You must pull yourself out of your depression and apathy. And you must

pray to G-d, asking Him to treat you mercifully and bless you with a complete recovery.

However, if (G-d forbid) you turn your back to G-d, and in addition sink into despair, you won't leave the hospital.

The source of health and of your recovery is faith in G-d and joy in life. Therefore, don't let the hours and days slip by. Rouse yourself from your lethargy and do all sorts of things to fill yourself with a zest for life. Take hold of yourself and work actively to become cheerful. Go out of your way to treat others kindly, and greet everyone with a pleasant expression. In addition, speak to G-d at length. Tell Him of your pains and your broken heart.

As a result, you will enjoy a complete recovery, and you will soon leave the hospital grounds.

## 6.

You are suffering much in the hospital, both in your body and in your mind. Be aware, however, that you can recover, and that your health depends entirely on G-d.

Do not despair of G-d's compassion. Speak to G-d in your own words. Tell him of your sufferings and ask Him to heal you. Then you will experience miracles.

Our Sages have told us of "two who suffered the same illness. Both prayed to G-d, but only one recovered. Why? The first one prayed with feelings, and so G-d answered him; the second, however, prayed mechanically, and so G-d didn't respond to him" (Rosh Hashanah 18a).

Be like that first person who was answered. Exert yourself, and speak to G-d with feeling.

Tell G-d that you sincerely regret all the wrong you have done; confess your misdeeds to Him, and beseech Him to treat you compassionately. Then you will certainly have a complete recovery.

Our Sages have said, "Before a sick person is healed, all of his sins are forgiven" (Nedarim 41a). This is because the root cause of disease is wrong action.

Return to G-d with your entire being. Now is an especially good time to return to G-d, because as you lie on your sickbed in the hospital, you can easily see that a person's life hangs by a thread and that so much of people's noisy hustle and bustle is empty, wasted and meaningless.

When a person is well, he runs from one activity to another, and he never stands still a

moment to ask basic questions about the meaning of his life. No – he barges forward, earning a living, running from one place to another, and never appreciating the fact that he is healthy and free from pain. He imagines that things will go on like this forever. The furthest thing from his mind is that he too might fall ill or suffer injury, G-d forbid.

But you are ill forced into inactivity, lying on a hospital bed, and you see the frailty of human life. Therefore, begin to consider: What is the purpose of life altogether? What is the point of the entire cycle of a person's existence?

The spiritual masters teach us that a person's soul descends into this physical body so that from the low plane of this world he will return to G-d and serve Him by doing His will. G-d

gave us Jews the Torah, and He wants us to follow its' commandments - for instance, we keep Shabbat, and to give charity. When we keep these commandments, we attach to our bodies and our souls to our Creator. This is our main joy and happiness - that we were created Jews and that we may fulfill the will of our Creator.

Return to G-d with all your heart. He will perform miracles for you and you will leave the hospital. Then you will be able to perform the commandments of the Torah; and you will also be able to cheer up other people and bring them close to G-d.

## 7.

You have been brought to the state that you must lie in a hospital bed. Inside, you are eaten up by pain and resentment: "Why did this



happen to me? There are many people who are worse than I am. Why was I chosen to suffer?"

But such thoughts will lead you nowhere. To the contrary, you will only make yourself sicker, G-d forbid. Instead, accept reality: you are sick, lying in a hospital bed, undergoing all sorts bothersome and painful treatment. Now begin to think: "What can I do to get well and leave this place?"

The answer is to return to the one who is causing your problems - which is to say, to G-d Himself. Our Sages have said, "After the Jews in the wilderness were bitten by poisonous snakes, when they raised their eyes heavenward and accepted G-d's rule, they were healed" (Rosh Hashanah 29a). All that G-d asks of a person is that he return to Him. Perhaps it was precisely for this reason that

you have become ill. Now you have the time to think about your life, your purpose in this world, and how you will appear before G-d after you leave this world.

Therefore, return to G-d with a sincere heart, and He will heal you.

## 8.

At this moment, make a special effort to be joyful. Be aware that you won't remain in your present state forever. You will get better. Your joyfulness, in fact, will speed your recovery. A person's return to health, is dependent of his state of mind – on how positive his outlook is, and how confident of recovery he is.

Most people who fall ill lose a sense of perspective and see themselves as remaining disabled for the rest of their life, G-d forbid. Our Sages, however, have told us otherwise:

"G-d does not afflict the Jews unless he has first prepared their cure" (Megillah 13b). Without any doubt, your cure has been prepared, and you will soon return to health.

In particular, if you pray to G-d you will bring closer the day of your recovery. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov said, "When a sick person prays to G-d with tears, G-d accepts his prayers and heals him" (Sefer Hamidot, Prayer, 64). Do not let such an opportunity slip by. Pour out your heart to G-d now and plead to Him to treat you kindly. As a result, you will soon recover.

## 9.

Do whatever you can to encourage yourself. Follow your doctor's orders, and eat and drink as much as you need.

A person's cure can come from his food. We see this in the verse, "Your food and your water will be blessed, and G-d will remove disease from your midst" (Ex. 23). When a person prays to G-d, then G-d gives this person's food curative power so that he is healed and doesn't need any more medicine.

There are all types of diseases and all types of medicines. For instance, some diseases grow in a person over a period of several years, like a seed that slowly grows into a tree; another type of disease is hereditary and grows inside a person without his awareness of it until one day he feels something wrong; and so on. As for medicines, some are simple drugs; more serious diseases require more complex medications; very serious diseases need difficult-to-obtain drugs, and so on. Sometimes, unfortunately, a disease is so

serious and so far advanced that it is beyond the help of drugs, even though in its' beginning stages, when it was as yet undiagnosed, it had been amenable to treatment.

But when a person accustoms himself to pray to G-d, he can reach the point where he will be cured from disease by bread and water alone, and then all medicine is superfluous. The food he eats may also cure diseases within him of which he is unaware. This is because the power of prayer draws upon a person a special blessing from G-d, making it unnecessary to rely on man-made remedies.

The strength of prayer is great. Fortunate is the person who doesn't deceive himself but comes to the realization that ultimately his help comes only from G-d.

## 10.

Be sure to give charity every day, even if it is only a few cents. King Solomon said, "Charity saves from death" (Prov. 10), and our Sages have told us, "If a person's door was never opened to help others, it will ultimately be opened to let the doctor in" (Midrash Rabbah, Shir Hashirim 86:17).

Now that you are in a hospital lying on your sickbed, put aside a container for charity. Deposit a few coins in it every day and beseech G-d that He heal you. Giving charity is a great deed, and in its merit a sick person can return to health. The prophet Malachi said in the name of G-d, "Those who fear My Name will be illuminated by the light of the charity that they gave. This will shine upon them like the sun, and its' rays will heal them" (Mal. 3). The

spiritual power of giving charity gives the sun the strength to shine its healing rays on a person. Thus, giving charity leads to health. As King Solomon said, "Charity gives life" (Prov. 11); and "The path of charity leads to life" (ibid. 12).

Therefore, give some charity every day – In the merit of that, G-d will give you life, and you will return home. Then take the money you set aside and give it to deserving poor people.

Once you are home, resolve that whenever a poor person approaches you, you will give him something. When a person gives charity, any heavenly judgments there may be against him are destroyed, and he emerges from possible death to life. By giving charity, you will save

not only yourself but also your entire household from illness.

Do not underestimate the greatness of charity. G-d loves charity more than the sacrifices He had commanded the Jews to offer in the temple. When a person opens his hand and gives charity to a worthy cause, G-d opens His treasure chest and gives that person and his family life, health, a good income, and deliverance from problems.

So now, while you are still in the hospital, begin to give charity every day. In the merit of your donations, you will leave the hospital in good health.

## **11.**

Take hold of yourself – do not allow anything to dismay you. Be assured that you will enjoy a complete recovery.



You can help yourself a great deal by taking the time to learn Torah – the books of the Jewish tradition. A person who learns Torah is guarded from illness. Our Sages have said, "If you want to be spared illness in your ears or other limbs, turn your ear to the Torah. Then you will inherit life" (Midrash Rabbah, Haazinu, 17:1). When a person learns Torah, the Torah itself guards him from evil, and he can recuperate completely from any illness he has.

Especially now that you are lying in a hospital bed, make sure to learn at least some Torah every day. For instance, learn the weekly portion of the Pentateuch, the *Chumesh* (which is divided into a yearly cycle). If you can read the entire portion in Hebrew with the commentary of Rashi and with the

accompanying "Targum", that is best of all. But if not, read as much as you can. Try to learn at least a few verses every day. This itself will help you get better, because the spiritual light that shines from the Torah is a healing light.

It would be wonderful if you could also learn some Midrash (Rabbinic homiletics) on the weekly portion. The Midrash enlightens a person's eyes, enabling him to have a deeper understanding of the spiritual light that shines from the Torah.

Furthermore, you could do no better than also learning Jewish laws and customs. (In Hebrew, you can read the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, or *Ben Ish Chai* – which addresses itself to Sephardic customs; and there are many

outstanding books in English on all aspects of Jewish living and law.)

In the merit of learning Torah, you will achieve a complete recovery. Once you do return home from the hospital, see to it that you continue learning at least a minimal amount of Torah on a daily basis. Our Sages have said that "a person who learns Torah doesn't need to bring any sacrifices [for the Torah instead of the sacrifices serves to bring him closer to G-d]" (Men. 110a). Our Sages also said "a scholar who studies Torah every day for the sake of heaven needs neither a sword nor a spear, because G-d Himself protects him" (Tana Devei Eliyahu Rabbah 4). Finally, our Sages declared, "Come and see the great power of Torah. If a person learns Torah,

it purifies him of all the wrong-doing that he repents of – even idol worship" (Ibid 18).

Therefore, set aside time to learn Torah every day. This will shield you from all evil. You will be granted both spiritual and physical healing, for Torah guards a person from evil when he is young, and it fills his days with satisfaction and goodness when he grows older.

***An Awesome and Wonderful Prayer for a Sick Person***

G-d, please have pity on me, I am sick and broken.

Please send me a complete recovery, so that I can leave this difficulty and be me.

G-d, You are the true healer. Please have compassion on me and heal me. Please take away the cause of my disease, which has brought me so many painful symptoms. I am lying here on my sickbed – pain-ridden, suffering, and bitter. In my anguish, I don't know what to do to help myself.

G-d, you are the true healer. Cure me, please. Save me, You have the power to do so, You to Whom I sing praises.

Please put an end to my suffering, so that I may leave this troubled, torturous time. I resolve to return to You with all my heart, and I ask You to have mercy on me. Please send me a speedy cure; please fill all of my limbs with strength and health.

May I be completely cured and rise from my sickbed happily and painlessly. May I be as healthy as anyone else. May I serve You faithfully, and perform the commandments of the Torah.

Please help me strengthen myself and cheer myself up. Your servant, Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, taught us that sickness and pains are caused by depression.

Please help me cheer my broken self, even though I am full of pain.

Please help me be aware that when I fill myself with joy, I will draw a holy spirit of life into all parts of my body, and then I will enjoy a speedy recovery.

G-d, please cure me of my pains and illness.

Please help me be a good person. Please help me keep the Torah that you gave us at Mount Sinai.

I now return to You with all of my heart, and I intend to follow all of Your commandments.

And may You please heal me, both in body and in spirit. Please fill my life with goodness and happiness. May I never have to depend on the favors of others, but may You always be the One to help me and to cure me, from this moment on – so may it be Your will, Amen.

***Never Lose Hope!******translated from Sichot Moharash.***

The most obvious sign that a person has lost hope is that he sleeps excessively.

A person who is without hope imagines that by sleeping he will escape his many troubles. But this is a mistake. His deep, fatiguing sleep will only make him more depressed. He will be unable to help himself at all and will lay in bed deathly still, overcome by bitterness. If a person will continue in this way, he will eventually become completely unbalanced, G-d forbid.

When a person gives up on himself, he is really committing an act of suicide. Instead, no matter what the situation, a person must never give up. It was to this purpose – of raising



people out of despair – that Rabbi Nachman of Breslov toiled.

Rabbi Nachman cried out, "My friends! Never lose hope! Despair does not even exist!" This is a teaching that will eventually be made clear to all of Israel, and to the entire world as well, by the Messiah himself – may he arrive speedily in our days.

A person should believe in G-d with simplicity. He should be aware that everything is in its essence G-dliness, and that only G-d and no one else exists. Such a person will never lose hope, nor even become depressed. How can a person despair, knowing that G-d is right at his side? Despair comes only when a person is unaware of G-d's closeness. When a person imagines that G-d is distant from him, he suffers exile and despondency. Only then

does a person despair of his life, in both this world and in the spiritual world-to-come. When the Messiah will come, he will make it clear to everyone that G-d does exist, and that He is close to every person, for there is no existence independent of Him. Then despair will be annihilated.

It is apropos that it was Rabbi Nachman who cried out so profoundly that "despair does not even exist," for Rabbi Nachman's teachings reveal the truth of G-d's existence and His closeness to everyone. Fortunate is the person who learns Rabbi Nachman's teachings and heads his lessons.

A person must never despair in either his physical or spiritual concerns. Despair can bring a person to lose all: both this world and the next. Despair can bring a person to kill

himself. But even before that point is reached, a person who has lost hope ceases to apply himself. In matters of spirituality, he lets everything fall by the wayside. He doesn't learn Torah, pray, or perform G-d's commandments. As a result, he doesn't enjoy this world, and he forfeits the world-to-come.

On the other hand, there are great tzaddikim (spiritual masters) in this world. These people cling to G-d, the source of life. They gaze upon the spiritual "supernal chariot," and are always performing mystic "unifications" of G-d's names. Such tzaddikim *do* despair of both this world and the world-to-come. That is to say, they serve G-d with absolutely no thought of receiving reward. The higher they rise in serving G-d, the more they "despair" of the use of this world and, as well, of the pleasure of

the world-to-come. Instead, they look upon themselves as the most insignificant of people. For instance, the great rabbi of Talmudic times, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zaccai, told his students who stood around his deathbed that he didn't know whether he would go to Paradise or to Purgatory, for he saw before him two roads (Ber. 28b). Nevertheless, such tzaddikim yearn to come closer to G-d. Indeed, the very fact that they have given up on both this world and the world-to-come helps them grow even greater in serving G-d. Happy are they, and bountiful their portion.

It is because of such great tzaddikim that those people who are truly far from G-d have the chance to make something wonderful of their lives. Even if a person violated the entire Torah numerous times: even if he has already lost both this world and the world-to-come – If

he approaches such holy tzaddikim, he has the hope to rectify his past and create for himself a beautiful future. This is because such tzaddikim bring G-d's presence down to the most fallen, lonely people. These tzaddikim can raise these bowed and withered souls, and illuminate them by making them aware of G-d.

How can we tell whether a tzaddik has really "despaired" of both this world and the world-to-come? If a tzaddik always speaks of G-d; if he always reveals the truth of G-d's presence; if he always assures the downcast and the sullied that they too can come close to G-d - then we can be sure that this tzaddik has "despaired" of both worlds.

The path of serving G-d is dangerous, for one can slip and fall into real despair, G-d forbid, to such a degree that he will not rise

again. Unfortunately, many people did, in fact, fall in this manner.

But as for us we have the words of Rabbi Nachman: "My friends! Never give up hope! Despair does not even exist!"

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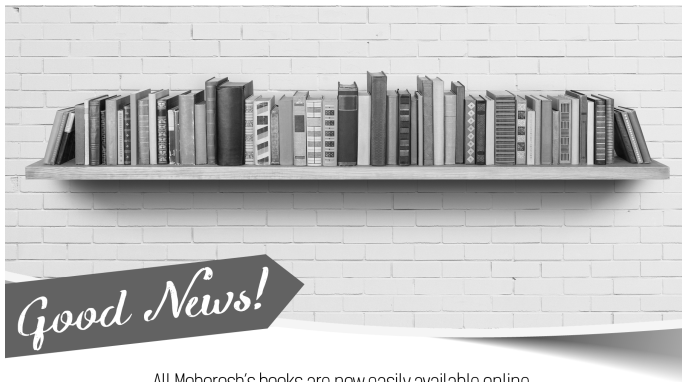
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