

The Rabbi's Only Son

Rebbe Nachman's Tales

There was once a rabbi who had no children. Eventually he had an only son, and he raised and married him off. The son would sit in a room upstairs studying Torah, as was the way with those who were better off.

He would constantly study and pray. But he felt a certain lack within himself, though he didn't know what it was. He felt no real taste in his studies and prayers. He told this to two of his young friends, who advised him to visit a particular Tzaddik (righteous individual).

Now this son had performed a certain mitzvah that brought him to the level of the "Small-Light".

The son told his father that he felt no taste in his prayers and studies and that something was missing, though he didn't know what it was. Because of this, he wanted to visit that Tzaddik (righteous individual).

"What reason could you have to travel to *him*?" asked his father. **"Surely you are more learned than he is and you come from a better family. It is not proper for you to go to him. Don't follow this path."**

He thus prevented him from going, and the son returned to his studies. Yet he still felt the same lack. Again he took counsel with the same friends, who advised him, as before, to go to the Tzaddik. Again he went to his father, but the father dissuaded him and prevented him from going. The same thing happened several times.

The son felt he was lacking something, and he greatly yearned to satisfy his need, even though he did not know what it was. He came again to his father and pressed him to the point that the father had no option but to travel with him since he did not want to let his only son go alone.

The father said to him: **"You see! I will go with you. I will prove to you that there is nothing of any substance in him."** They prepared the carriage and set off on their journey.

"I am going to make a test," said the father. **"If everything goes smoothly, it means this journey has been ordained by Heaven. But if not, it means it is not ordained by Heaven and we shall go back."**