

How Old Hasidic Pearls of Wisdom Can Help Us in Our Own Difficult Time

I. **Introduction** - What is the Hasidic tradition? When did it begin? Who started it? Why did it take root, and among whom? What ideas are central to its wisdom?

II. A Few Gems

A. Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav has handed down to us these words of his great-grandfather, the Baal Shem Tov: “Alas! The world is full of enormous lights and mysteries, and man shuts them from himself with one small hand.”

B. Rabbi Shelomo said, “If you want to raise a man from mud and filth, do not think it enough to keep standing on top reaching down to him a helping hand. You must go all the way down yourself, into mud and filth. Then take hold of him with strong hands and pull him and yourself into the light.”

C. Rabbi Mikhal said: “When the Evil Urge tries to tempt us to sin, it tempts us to become all too righteous.”

D. Rabbi Nahum once said to the hasidim gathered about him: “If we could hang all our sorrows on pegs and were allowed to choose those we liked best, every one of us

would take back his own, for all the rest would even seem more difficult to bear.”

E. The Rabbi of Berdichev saw a man hustling along the street, looking neither left or right. “Why are you rushing so?” he asked him.

“I am after my livelihood,” the man replied.

“And how do you know,” continued the rabbi, “that your livelihood is running out before you, so that you have to rush after it? Perhaps it’s behind you, and all you need to do to encounter it is to stand still - but you are running away from it!”

III. Wrap-up