

Rebbe Nachman and the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

Faced with the task of helping individuals stuck in the depths of their addiction, those souls *given-over* (addiction from the latin root *addictus*: to be given over) to that which they cannot control; Bill Wilson moved beyond the well trodden path of behavioral intervention disclosing a path from the side wherein the addicted individual could regain power (*koach*) through the paradoxical movement of losing hope in power. Foreclosing on the individuals capacity to control the adhesion to the object of addiction, Bill W. sought the propelling force behind/beyond the addiction. The object was no longer the question. The subject, driven to an unending desire that erases all (other) desire was called to uncover the lack, the void that constitutes the craving (*teshukah*) and the longing (*ga'a'gua*) for the object that simultaneously offers transient relief as it reinvigorates the craving. The object (drink, drug, action, thought) covers, sutures the lack that rests in the self, offering momentary inattention to the incessant craving for that which can never satisfy.

Rebbe Nachman, neither mystic nor existentialist, offers a glimpse into the inner world of the soul; from the highest (*atik*) to the lowest (*netzach we-hod*) allowing those who study his words to find themselves within his text.

Having worked with addicted souls, the souls of chaos (*tohu*: rashi bereshit 1:2- *tohu*, for it confounds and confuses the mind); I have found in Rebbe Nachman a path beyond the answerless void, a way out of the space of silence that has appealed to those stuck in the stuckness of being. Over the next few weeks I will offer my thoughts.

This is by no means a discovery (*hiddush*) but an uncovering...