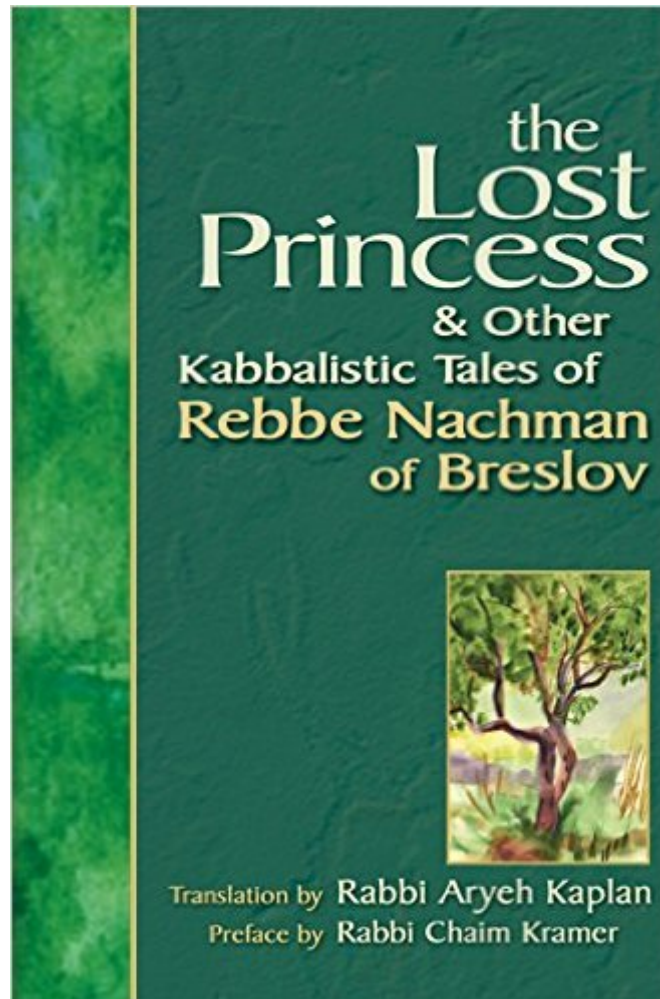


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Lost Princess: And Other Kabbalistic Tales Of Rebbe Nachman Of Breslov



Synopsis

Discover the hidden secrets of Torah and Kabbalah through the captivating stories of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov. Rebbe Nachman's stories are among the great classics of Jewish literature. They have been recognized by Jews and non-Jews alike for their depth and insight into both the human condition and the realm of the mysterious. —from Aryeh Kaplan's Introduction

For centuries, spiritual teachers have told stories to convey lessons about God and perceptions of the world around us. Hasidic master Rebbe Nachman of Breslov (1772–1810) perfected this teaching method through his engrossing and entertaining stories that are fast-moving, brilliantly structured, and filled with penetrating insights. This collection presents the wisdom of Rebbe Nachman, translated by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan and accompanied by illuminating commentary drawn from the works of Rebbe Nachman's pupils. This important work brings you authentic interpretations of Rebbe Nachman's stories, allowing you to experience the rich heritage of Torah and Kabbalah that underlies each word of his inspirational teachings.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This volume has twelve of Rebbe Nachman's tales with elaborate notes by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan that explain the mystical references that he sees in the stories. See also my reviews of *The Empty Chair* and *The Seven Beggars* for other information about Rebbe Nachman and his teachings and for a discussion about the positive and negative reports about his tales. As written in the other reviews, people differ on whether or not Rebbe Nachman's tales are profound. In this volume, his disciple Rabbi Nathan, Rebbe Nachman's disciple, claims that this is a "holy book" in fact "Holy of Holies"

and the stories in it contain "the secrets of the Torah. One should not think that these are simple stories." He writes that Rebbe Nachman told these tales "to teach us how to serve God." They contain "great secrets and moral guidance." What are these secrets? Rebbe Nachman believes that God is made up of ten parts that became disentangled and that humans have a duty to help put God together again, for God cannot do it alone. One of the ten divine pieces is feminine. "The Lost Princess" in the title tale is this tenth section that is disassociated from the other fragments, is lost, and needs to be found, and reassembled. Thus Rebbe Nachman's God is not the all-powerful monotheistic deity, but a Humpty Dumpty-type polytheistic being that needs to be put together again, who relies on humans to help in the assembly, who teaches that the messianic age will not occur until He is complete again. Whether you accept his mystical notions or not and whether you are convinced that Rebbe Nachman's tales are profound and contain the truth, you will enjoy them as interesting tales.

Sippurey Ma'asiyot, the book of fairy tale like stories written by R' Nachman of Breslov, is a unique book in Jewish literature. No other Hasidic Rebbe wrote a work of fictional stories, and certainly not ones like this. These stories are esoteric fairy tales with multiple levels of meaning. They are strange, mysterious, and often beautiful. R' Nachman was not a writer per se, however, and whereas his spiritual discourses (collected in Likutey Moharan) are works of incredible beauty and poetic-linguistic-exegetical genius, these stories are renowned for their symbolic and narrative content, but not, I would say, for their style. I'm mentioning this because I think readers will have a better chance of appreciating the stories if they come to them with the right expectations. They are not aesthetic entertainments or charming parables, but something stranger and deeper, to be approached with humility and patience. One more thing I'd like to say is that Aryeh Kaplan's compilation of commentaries in this book is a helpful starting place for thinking about the meanings of the tales, but they are not coherent explanations and are sometimes more confusing than helpful, in my humble opinion. So this book will not spoonfeed you Rebbe Nachman's stories, or explain them. But it will start you on the personal journey of understanding them, and it's a good place to start.

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