

Seuda Shlishis, Parshas Bo, 5766

At the third Shabbos meal, Mohorosh Shlit" a spoke inspiring words based on Lekutei Mohoran, Part II, Lesson 7, which discusses the topics of compassionate leaders and the importance of leaving behind children and students in the world.

Rebbe Nachman says, it is written (Yeshayahu 49:10): "For he that has compassion on them will lead them." That is to say, the one who is merciful, is the one who can be a leader. One needs to know how to conduct oneself with compassion. For upon the wicked or upon murderers and thieves it is forbidden to show mercy. The main compassion is when Israel, the holy nation, falls, G-d forbid, through their sins. This is the greatest compassion of all. For all harsh afflictions in the world are as naught compared to the heavy burden of sin, G-d forbid. In truth, where do sins come from? – only from lack of knowledge, since, "a person doesn't sin unless a spirit of folly enters him (Sotah 3a)." And this is the greatest act of compassion – to cause knowledge to enter a person and save him from sin. This is the concept of the verse (Tehillim 41): "Happy is the one who intelligently considers a poor person," i.e., the one who teaches intelligence to a person lacking it. As our Sages teach us "the only poor person is the one who lacks knowledge (Nedarim 41a)." The true leader needs to have mercy on him and to put knowledge into him. When he does this, then even when the leader's time to leave the world arrives and his Neshama rises and cleaves to his place in the upper worlds, at the same time, he is still here below, accomplishing great feats. For the goal and ultimate perfection is not that the Neshama merely be in a state of cleaving Above. Rather the main perfection of the Neshama is: when the Neshama is Above, it is at the same time here below. Therefore, a person needs to leave behind a blessing in this world – a son or a student – in order for his knowledge to remain below at the same time that he rises Above. As our Rabbis said (Bava Basra 116): "Who is referred to in the Posuk (Tehillim 55:20) '*Asher ain chalifos lamo*' – 'those for whom there is no substitute'? One opinion says it refers to the person that leaves no son, and one opinion says it means the one that leaves no student." Because when one leaves behind a son or a student who absorbed his knowledge, it is considered as if he has left a substitute in the world. Surely, there is no virtue in leaving behind a wicked son, G-d forbid. The ultimate purpose is to leave a son

behind who will also be in the category of a student – through receiving his father’s mind and knowledge. As to the opinion that says it only has to be a student, since the main thing is to leave behind one’s knowledge in the world, it is sufficient to leave only a student. *This* is the essential perfection – that a person leaves his knowledge in this world at the same time his Neshama ascends Above. And every person can fulfill this – not only a teacher – for when two people speak together about Awe of Heaven, and one of them illuminates his friend with a good word, his friend is considered to be in the category of his student. (See all of this in Lekutei Mohoran II: 7.)

Mohorosh explained that we see from this lesson that the primary virtue of a leader of Israel is that he be a true man of compassion and that his entire aim is to have compassion upon his fellow Jews and to take them out from their sins, for there is no greater compassion in the world like the compassion for a person who has fallen through his sins. The souls of Israel, in their root, are completely removed from sin, and sin has no relationship to them at all. Therefore, if, G-d forbid, they fall into sin, the main compassion is to take them out from their sins. And Rebbe Nachman begins by saying, “The leaders need to know how to conduct themselves with compassion, for upon the wicked, the murderers and the thieves it is forbidden to have mercy.” And even though Rebbe Nachman says in another place (Lekutei Mohoran I:182) that even the completely wicked should be judged favorably – to find in them something good – even so, he also says (Sefer Hamidos, Merivah #88) that we do not judge favorably one who incites others to sin, for one who seduces his friend to leave the straight path, there is no judging him favorably. This is the intention of Rebbe Nachman here: that upon the wicked who are seducers and inciters, it is forbidden to judge them favorably; they should be judged unfavorably and we must separate ourselves from them totally. However, upon the Holy Nation who falls into sins, G-d forbid, we certainly need to show very much compassion, to bring them out of their sins and to do anything possible to bring the souls of Israel closer to their Father in Heaven.

Therefore, it is a great mitzvah to speak words of Faith and Awe of Heaven with every person, because people are wandering about in this world filled with sadness and bitterness and their hearts are full of doubts and confusion about Faith. And they have no one to pour out their bitter hearts to. And when they see a happy person with a cheerful expression on his face, they are drawn to him like a magnet because they want to hear a good word from him. Therefore, Rebbe Nachman once said to his close followers that if they would be happy it would be a great favor for the whole world. And why? Because

when the people of the world see a happy person whose joy is on his face, they will open up and pour out the bitterness in their hearts to him and they will receive from him words of Faith and Awe of Heaven. There is no greater mitzvah than this – to revive a fellow Jew and to bring him out from his doubts and confusion. This is the true compassion that is mentioned above. A person should not say, “I am not a leader of Israel, and I have no connection to these things,” because these things relate to every person at every time. There is an obligation on every individual to raise sons and students. And when one speaks to others words of Faith and Awe of Heaven, he is literally raising students! And sometimes if the other person can’t take in his words, the words will bounce back and go into himself and he himself will be positively affected by his own words (Lekutei Mohoron, I:184). Therefore, it is a great mitzvah to speak words of Faith and Awe of Heaven with all of one’s acquaintances and close friends. And this is literally included in the mitzvah of Tzedakah, as it is written (Tehillim 41:2): “Fortunate is he who intelligently considers (“*maskil*”) the poor”, i.e., fortunate is he who shines intelligence (“*seichel*” - same root as “*maskil*”) into the person who is worse off and poorer than himself, for “a poor person is only one who is poor in knowledge (Nedarim 41a).” And if we shine knowledge and intelligence into him, what a great act of tzedakah this is (Lekutei Mohoran, I:106)!” And sometimes a storeowner or a businessman can fulfill this better than anyone else – because he is constantly speaking and dealing with people. And when he speaks words of Faith and Awe of Heaven with them, he thereby performs a tremendously great act of tzedakah! And he reveals and publicizes the truth of Hashem’s existence throughout the entire world.

We see that when a person merits raising up sons and students, his memory will be perpetuated for all generations. However, the essential purpose of having children and raising up students is that faith should continue from generation to generation. And a son is like a student because he receives the parent’s knowledge and keeps it going after him. And a student is like a son, because he who teaches Torah to his friend’s son, the Torah considers it as if he had fathered him (Sanhedrin 19b). When a person instills Faith and Awe of Heaven into his children and students when he is alive, he is fulfilling the main goal of Creation and he is considered alive even after his demise. As our Sages said (Bava Basra 116b): “*Asher ain chalifos lamo* – ‘those for whom there is no substitute’ – one says a son, and one says a student.” And they are both true, because when a person raises a son or a student and instills Faith and Awe of Heaven into him, he continues to exist in the world through his son or his student, and he doesn’t vanish or pass away at all. Therefore, happy

is the one who merits speaking with all of his friends and acquaintances words of Faith and Awe of Heaven, for in this way, he will reveal and publicize Hashem's presence in the world to all people and he will bring the world to its eternal rectification. Happy is he and fortunate is his lot.

Mohorosh tied these ideas to our Parsha in a wonderful way. We find in the Parsha (Shemos 13:8) the mitzvah of "You shall tell your son on that day, saying..." i.e., the mitzvah of telling over the story of the Exodus from Egypt. And our Sages said (Pesachim 116a): "If he has a son, the son asks. If he has no son, his wife asks. If he has no wife, he asks himself. Two Torah scholars ask each other." We need to understand, why is it, that only when it comes to the Exodus is there a mitzvah to "tell it over to others" – to a son or to a wife or to a friend. Furthermore, why is this mitzvah not like the mitzvah of "Remembering the Exodus every day" for which a person only needs to tell himself? According to the words of Rebbe Nachman mentioned above, we can understand it very well. For at the moment of the Exodus from Egypt, the souls of Israel rose up to become Hashem's Chosen Nation. And from that moment on, they have been perpetuating Faith in Hashem from generation to generation. Therefore, we were commanded precisely *then* to tell the story of the Exodus to our children and to others – because beginning exactly at that moment – we need to be engaged in raising sons and students who will perpetuate Faith in Hashem from generation to generation. Thus, the Torah commands us to fulfill the mitzvah of telling over the story of the Exodus to all categories of children – wise, wicked, simple and the one who doesn't know how to ask. As our Sages said (Yerushalmi Pesachim 70b): "The Torah speaks regarding four sons," because we need to bring them all close to Hashem and to speak to each and every one according to his individual needs. When the wise son asks (Devarim 6): "What are the testimonies and the decrees, etc.," we must answer him according to his own way. When the wicked son asks (Shemos 12:26): "What is this service to you?" and he has doubts, we must answer him according to *his* own way. When the simple son asks (Shemos 13:14): "What is *this*?" – this also denotes a question arising from doubts about Faith as it is written in the Tikunai Zohar (Tikun 22) that the word "*this*", in many verses, alludes to Faith - so we must also speak to the simple son according to *his* way and to conduct ourselves with compassion towards him in order to bring him close to Hashem. And when the son who doesn't know how to ask says nothing, then we should initiate the dialogue (Shemos 13:8): "And you shall tell your son on that day, saying..." We find that it is precisely on the festival of Pesach, which is the beginning of the revelation of holy Faith – as many of the mitzvos are

“Zeicher le’Yitziyas Mitzrayim” (a memorial of the Exodus) – that the mitzvah is to be deeply involved with raising sons and students and passing down to them pure and clear Faith. For through this there will be a continuation of the light of Faith for infinite generations to come. And Hashem should help us to always be occupied with revealing and publicizing Faith until we merit to see the redemption and salvation of Israel, swiftly in our days. Amen V’Amen.