

Seudah Shlishis, Parshas Emor 5764

At the third Shabbos meal, Mohorosh Shlit" a spoke inspiring words on the subject of when things go "according to plan vs. not according to plan", based on Lekutei Mohoran, Part II, Lesson 82.

Rebbe Nachman says: "There is a concept of 'according to plan and not according to plan', which is an aspect of Adam and Chava...and this is what we see, that sometimes things do not go according to plan for a person and this is caused by his feelings of self-importance and by his arrogating to himself the kingship, saying, "I will rule." But when he has humility, which is true wisdom (*chochma*; *chaf-ches-mem-hey*), which is an aspect of *chaf-ches* [*co'ach* – strength or power] *mem-hey* [*mah* – what], then things go smoothly and 'according to plan' for him."

Mohorosh explained that we learn from this teaching that the phenomenon of things going "according to plan" for a person depends on his attaining a perception of G-dliness from all of the details of creation. For such was the ultimate plan of creating the world – that we should merit to find Him in each and every detail of creation and we should utilize whatever we go through in life as a means to bring ourselves closer to Hashem. And this skill itself is called "according to plan", for it was the plan of creation that we should acquire this skill. However, due to the materialism and physicality of creation, every person suffers from confusion and from all kinds of trials and tribulations that seem to be "not according to plan." But the truth is that the plan of creation was that we should find Hashem's G-dliness also in those things which are "not according to plan." And when we merit to find it, we reconnect the "not according to plan" to the "according to plan", thus fulfilling the ultimate goal of creation.

This is also the concept of Adam and Chava. Adam is an aspect of "according to plan", because the plan and purpose of his being created was only that he should be bound to Hashem. The same is true of Chava, but she also has another aspect to her. Hashem saw that (*Bereishis*, ch. 2) "It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a **helper corresponding to him**" – an "**eizer k'negdo** (a helper 'corresponding to' or literally, 'against' him). That is, the

aspect of *k'negdo* (being 'against' him, so to speak) will help (*eizer*) him to draw closer to Hashem. Therefore, He created Chava. And through her being an aspect of *k'negdo* and "not according to plan" (i.e., not always according to Adam's plan, but certainly according to Hashem's plan), she would become a partner to Adam in helping him bind himself to Hashem. And then automatically, Adam and Chava would be able to attach themselves to each other in shalom – the *k'negdo* having been transformed into *eizer*. And the "not according to plan" would also be converted into "according to plan." And this is precisely the purpose of things not going according to plan.

A person is not in this world to be totally free from suffering and confusion. However, the main virtue of a Jew is to hold himself strong no matter what he goes through and this means having the skill to find Hashem's G-dliness also within the "not according to plan". And as soon as he finds it there, the entire situation transforms into "according to plan." For when he sees how it was Hashem's intention only to bring him closer to His service, he realizes that it was precisely what he went through that was the true "according to plan." Therefore, let a person not think that the Tzaddikim reached their levels through living lives of quietude and serenity and that troubles and afflictions did not pass over them. On the contrary, the Tzaddikim and people of integrity are the ones who go through more than anyone. But their overriding virtue is that they hold themselves strong no matter what they go through and they run to Hashem despite and by means of their troubles and suffering. They know very well that the hand of Hashem is hidden and treasured away in everything they go through. And through holding their ground in any situation they achieved what they achieved. Happy are they!

Rebbe Nachman says in this lesson that the main cause of things going "not according to plan" is a person's own feelings of greatness and his usurping the kingship from Hashem, saying "I will rule." This means that due to his arrogance and desire to be "seen" combined with the delusion that he needs to understand everything that happens in the world with the bit of wisdom and intelligence he has, it is certain that things will go against his will and not "according to plan." And his life becomes very bitter, because it is impossible to truly understand, in any way whatsoever, Hashem's ways of running the world. The ultimate goal of knowledge is to know that "we do not know," which means that we know that we know nothing, as Rebbe Nachman once swore, on one of the last Shabbos' of his life in Uman, that he knew nothing (**Chayei Mohoran ?**). It also once happened that people heard him crying loudly, "How does one merit to be a Jew?!" When Reb Nosson heard this he

was dumbfounded. Only a little earlier, Rebbe Nachman had revealed very awesome and wondrous teachings. So how can he now say that he knows nothing and also cry, “How does one merit to be a Jew”? However, Rebbe Nachman explained to him that, “Before, I did not know there were perceptions and levels like these. This means there are certainly more perceptions and levels that I have not yet merited to know and reach. It turns out that I know nothing.”

The more a person continues to grow and progress and the higher he goes, the more he should understand that he really knows nothing, unlike Elisha ben Abuya who was called Acher (“Other” - because after he lost his faith, he became like another person who nobody recognized). Elisha ben Abuya ascended to the Heavens and it was precisely there that he lost his faith and became a heretic, may G-d save us. He did not have the proper amount of self-nullification when he attempted to get closer to Hashem. And from the abundance of light he was totally blinded, just as one who gazes into the sun can become blinded. Coming close to Hashem needs to be with total nullification. What does total nullification mean? Does it mean that you should feel that you are worthless and a nobody? Does it mean that you should lose your sense of who you are? No. It means that you should know that no matter how high one goes, one still knows nothing about the true nature and essence of creation and how Hashem runs the world. And this was the level of Rabbi Akiva, who also ascended to the Heavens, but in his case, he entered in shalom and came out in shalom, because he had the wisdom to know that he knew nothing. And when a person has this wisdom – the wisdom to recognize that he has nothing but Hashem, then he has attained the most essential wisdom (*chochma*) whose letters are *chaf-ches* (*co’ach* – strength) *mem-hey* (*mah* – what) – *mah chocheinu; mah gevrusoseinu!*? (What is our strength, what is our might!?) [from the morning prayers]. He knows that we have no strength and might besides Hashem and this knowledge itself is perfect fear of Hashem, which is an aspect of the verse (*Tehillim*, ch. 96): “*Chilu mipanav col ha’aretz* (“Tremble before Him everyone on earth”); the first letters of each word spells *chochma*. And then everything goes “according to plan” for him, because he knows that whatever he goes through, down to the minutest detail, it all happens with Hashem’s personal Providence. And Hashem’s personal Providence is the greatest “according to plan” there is!

The concept of “entering in shalom” and “coming out in shalom” is an aspect of the statement in the *Zohar* (*Vayakel* 113b): “Fortunate is the person who

can go in and come out,” referring to perceptions of G-dliness. Happy is the one who knows how to ascend to perceptions of G-dliness and also how to come down again. That is, he knows how to find Hashem’s G-dliness when everything is going “according to plan” and how to find Him in times of trouble and suffering, may G-d save us. And even when he is engaged in the mundane affairs of this world, he will not forget Hashem for a moment. And this is the concept of “entering in shalom” and “coming out in shalom.” When a person is humble and unassuming, he is at peace with all people and he is able to hold himself strong in any situation, which is not true for the person who is conceited and who arrogates the kingship to himself, saying “I will rule.” It is impossible for him to be at peace with everyone. And this is the main cause of his downfall. This was the flaw of Rebbi Akiva’s students. They did not properly absorb this teaching and as a result, failed to show the proper level of honor to each other. They all died between Pesach and Shavuos, as the days of the Omer are special days for focusing on our character traits in order to improve them one trait at a time. On Pesach night, Hashem shines on us a tremendous light, but starting from the day after Pesach, this light is concealed and each of the forty-nine days leading up to Shavuos are days of constriction of the light, days on which we focus the light of our own intellects on our individual character traits, a different trait on each of the forty-nine days, to improve them and to make them shine. And these forty-nine days are an especially conducive time to realize that in each and every Jew there is a special talent that doesn’t exist in any other Jew. Therefore, I need to honor him for his special point. And this is the essence of humility. But when one arrogates to himself the kingship and says, “I will rule”, and “only my special point is important”, this is the essence of his failure in life. And then everything goes “not according to plan” for him. We find that our main service is to strive to merit true wisdom; i.e. to know “what is our strength and what is our might”, which is true humility. And then everything will go “according to plan”. And we will find Hashem’s G-dliness in everything that we go through and live a good life in this world and the next.

Mohorosh connected these ideas to our parsha in the following way. In the beginning of the parsha we find the special laws for the Kohanim, which forbid them to contaminate themselves from the dead with the exception of a few close relatives (*Vayikra*, ch. 21): “And to his virgin sister who is close to him, who has had no husband, to her shall he contaminate (**yi’tamah**) himself” (i.e. he is required to participate in her funeral). Perhaps we can say that Rebbe Nachman’s ideas discussed above regarding the attainment of holy

wisdom are hinted to in this verse. We know that holy wisdom is referred to as one's "sister", as it is written (Proverbs, ch. 7): "Say to wisdom, you are my sister." And the Kohein who performs the divine service is in the category of the Tzaddik who ascends to lofty perceptions of G-dliness and who longs to bind himself to Hashem. Therefore, his ascending needs to be in the category of "according to plan and not according to plan", as mentioned above. That is, it must be in the category of (Zohar, *Vayakel* 113b): "Fortunate is the person who can go in and come out." which means that he will enter in shalom and come out in shalom. And he will find Hashem's G-dliness in each and every detail, whether that detail is "according to plan" and understandable or "not according to plan" and incomprehensible. Moreover, not once will he think that he understands all there is to know; rather, he will hold himself strong with the trait humility, as if he were totally **tamei** and has not yet merited to enter the gates of holiness at all. And this is the verse, "And to his virgin sister" – the attainment of holy wisdom - an aspect of "Say to wisdom, you are my sister." "*La yi'tama*" – to her – to holy wisdom - shall he "contaminate" himself. That is, he should consider himself in the category of being completely *tamei* and far away as one who still comprehends nothing. For the essence of wisdom is to know that he knows nothing. Yet, in this way, he will merit to enter the Tabernacle and the Holy Temple and to perform the divine service. And his coming closer to Hashem will not harm him at all since he is a master of "going in and coming out" as in the saying of the Zohar: "Fortunate is the person who can go in and come out". He will enter in shalom and come out in shalom. And he will accomplish all he needs to accomplish. May Hashem help us to be close to the true Tzaddikim and they will place these truths within us and will live by them with all our hearts. And we will merit to be attached to Hashem in truth for now and evermore. Amen v'amen.