

Friday Night, Parshas Ki Sisa Shabbos Parah, 5766

Friday night, at the first Shabbos meal, Mohorosh Shlit" a spoke inspiring words based on Lekutei Mohoran, Part I, Lesson 133, which discusses the topic of "the light of the Tzaddik."

Rebbe Nachman says: "It is written (Mishlei 4): 'The path of the righteous is like the glow of sunlight that grows steadily brighter until the height of noonday.' For the sun itself, in its own place, is always shining the same, at the start of the day and at mid-day. The obscuring [of the light] is only due to the earth's intervening between people and the sun. Therefore, the light does not spread out so much at the beginning of the day, but only little by little, until it is spread out over the land. It is the same with regard to the Tzaddik. By himself he is always shining. The obstruction is due to those who receive the light and it is due to the intervening earth, namely, this world. For people are sunk in this world. Therefore, they are unable to receive the light of the Tzaddik. And this is the verse: 'The path of the righteous is like the glow of sunlight,' literally 'like the glow of sunlight': like the sun that is always shining, only that the obstruction is due to the earth blocking the light. So too, the Tzaddikim are always shining. It is only the earth – this world – that gets in the way of seeing their great light. And even though their light is very great, and the whole of this world is small and very inferior compared to their great light, nevertheless, it gets in the way and blocks us from seeing their light, as in the analogy of a small coin: if you hold it right against your eye, it will prevent you from seeing a great mountain, even though the mountain is thousands of times bigger than the small coin. But since the coin stands in front of your eyes, it blocks your vision until you do not see an object many times bigger than the coin. So too, when a person comes to this world, he remains sunk there in the vanities of the world, and it seems to him that there is nothing better for him than this. This small and puny world prevents him from seeing the great and exalted light of the Torah that is "many thousands of times bigger" than this world. And this is literally the metaphor of the sun: the earth blocks a person from seeing the great light of the sun, even though the sun is many times bigger than the earth. And all of this is because the world stands before his eyes and blocks him until he is unable to see the light of the Torah and the Tzaddikim, which is "thousands of times greater" than

the world. However, if he moves the small obstruction away from his eyes, that is, he turns his eyes away from the [vanities of] the world and does not gaze at the world, but raises his head and lifts up his eyes and contemplates what is above this world that blocks and obstructs, then he will merit to see the great and exalted light of the Torah and the Tzaddikim, for truly, their light is “thousands and tens of thousands of times greater” than all of this world and its vanities, as stated before. It is only that this world stands before his eyes and does not allow him to turn his eyes upward to gaze upon the light of the Torah and the Tzaddikim, literally as in the analogy of the small coin that stands in front of his eyes and stops him from seeing a great mountain, etc. However, with just a little effort he can remove the coin from his eyes, and immediately, he will see the mountain that is bigger [than the coin]. It is literally the same with regard to the world and the Torah: just by moving something away, he can cause the world to move away from before his eyes and then he will merit to see the great light of the Torah and the Tzaddikim that shines in all the worlds with a very great light. Understand this well. Similarly, I have heard in the name of the Baal Shem Tov that he said, ‘Oy! The world is filled with wondrous and awesome lights and secrets, and the small hand stands before the eyes and prevents a person from seeing great lights.’ (These are the words of Rebbe Nachman.)

Mohorosh explained that the light of the Tzaddikim shines in this world with a very sweet and wonderful radiance. And the person who merits to taste some of this light, his eyes will be opened with the blessed light of Hashem. And he literally experiences the taste of the Garden of Eden. When the first Man was created, the hidden light of the six days of creation was shining. And as long as he lived in the Garden of Eden, he was able to enjoy this light. He would look into this light and see from one end of the universe to the other. It was only after he sinned and was driven out of the Garden that this light was hidden and the world became dark for him. Since then, all following generations need to fix his sin and draw down the hidden light to this world once again. This is the service of the Tzaddikim in every generation, who give themselves over completely to finding Hashem in each and every detail of life until they once again draw down the hidden light to this world. This service is an aspect of the verse (Mishlei 4): “The path of the righteous is like the glow of sunlight that grows steadily brighter until the height of noonday.” And the person who merits to draw close to them will also have some of this light drawn upon him and the days of his life will begin to shine with the blessed light of Hashem and he will experience a wondrous taste all the days of his life.

However, there are two factors which cause this light to be concealed from a person, namely, the two things mentioned above in the words of Rebbe Nachman: the small coin and the small hand. “The small coin” is the pursuit of money. As soon as a person invests all of his mind and knowledge in the pursuit of money, and all of his activities are only aimed at increasing his wealth and possessions, it is already very difficult for him to see the light of the Tzaddik. For even the smallest coin placed in front of one’s eyes will cause even the greatest mountain to be hidden from him. Of course, the money of a Jew is a very important thing, since he can perform mitzvos and acts of kindness with it, which expand the boundaries of holiness in the world; and if a person uses his money for holiness, he can do very great things with it. But, as soon as a person looks at money as something of substance with an existence independent of holiness, and wants to hoard his riches and stuff his pockets and becomes jealous and begrudging of other people’s wealth, then the “small coin” blinds his eyes, making it impossible for him to see the light of the Tzaddik. Therefore, the first pre-requisite to opening one’s eyes to the light of the Tzaddik is to raise one’s vision above the money and to move the “small coin” away from one’s eyes. Then, he will be able to truly see and comprehend the light of the Tzaddik.

The second obstruction is the “small hand”. This is the phenomenon of scoffing at and mocking the words of the Tzaddik. This scoffing can be accomplished with a slight movement of the hand, for example, by making a slight waving motion with the hand, a person can convey the message that what he is hearing is sheer nonsense. This hand movement, which is the “small hand”, is very dangerous for the following reason. When a person hears words of inspiration from the mouth of a Tzaddik and his heart is burning with passion for Hashem, he makes up his mind that from now on he will definitely be an *ish kasher* (an upright and honest person), and then he goes outside and bumps into a scoffer who asks him, “Where were you?” He says to him, “I was with a certain Tzaddik.” And the scoffer asks him, “What did you hear there?” And he says, “I truly heard the words of the living G-d.” And then the scoffer waves his “small hand” as if to say, “This is nothing but nothing.” In this way, he cools the person down from all of the holy inspiration and passion that he received from the Tzaddik. We see that the “small hand” is a powerful way to cause the light of the Tzaddik to be hidden from the world. A person needs to be very strong not to be fazed at all by anyone who wants to discourage him and cool him down from drawing close to the Tzaddik. He shouldn’t let it enter his ears nor let his eyes see any

attempt to draw him away from the Tzaddik. Then he will walk on a secure path and merit to enjoy the light of the Tzaddik.

On the other hand, we need to know with regard to drawing close to the Tzaddik, that we must also guard our “eyes” from being “blinded” by the greatness of the Tzaddik’s light, just as we are careful not to be blinded by the light of the sun. Just as it is impossible to gaze at the light of the sun when it is blazing at noon, so too, in drawing close to the Tzaddik, it is impossible to look at everything he does without some kind of “covering” or “hiding-place”, otherwise one’s “eyes could be blinded”, G-d forbid and he will no longer be able to “see” anything. Rather, one needs to know that he will not be able to understand all of the Tzaddik’s ways. Neither must one do everything exactly the same way the Tzaddik does it. The Tzaddik has very lofty intentions in everything he does, and someone who tries to imitate him can end up “blinding his own eyes”, G-d forbid. About this and similar matters the Sages say (Talmud Chagiga 113a): “Do not seek what is beyond you.” The main thing is to walk with simple faith and wholeheartedness, to believe that all the words of the Tzaddik are not simple and to observe and contemplate all of the revealed ways of the Tzaddik, such as his Torah and prayer and to emulate him in these ways, e.g. to be very diligent in learning Torah and to increase in prayer and hisbodedus. And then the great light of the Tzaddik will be drawn upon him and his eyes will shine with the light of Hashem “that grows steadily brighter until the height of noonday.” Happy is he and fortunate is his lot.

Mohorosh connected the above ideas to our Parsha in the following way: At the end of the Parsha, it is written that the skin of Moshe Rebbeinu’s face had become radiant when Hashem had spoken to him on Mt. Sinai immediately before he came down with the second Tablets. This is the matter of the revelation of the light of the Tzaddik as discussed above, as it is written (Shemos 34): “Aharon and all the children of Israel saw Moshe, and behold! - the skin of his face had become radiant; and they feared to approach him.” Moshe Rebbeinu merited this radiance when Hashem placed him in a cave on Mt. Sinai and then shielded him with His “hand”. (Rashi on verse 29: From where did Moshe merit this radiance? Our Sages say [Midrash Tanchuma 37] that it resulted from the cave when Hashem placed His hand upon Moshe’s face [Shemos 33:22].) For when the Divine presence was revealed to Moshe in the cave, he merited a supreme cleaving to Hashem until he was completely included in Him, as it is brought in the words of Rebbe Nachman (Lekutei Mohoran, Part I, Lesson 54) that the word for ‘cave’ – **ma’arah** – is

the language of cleaving as in the verse (Kings I, 7:36) “*k’ma’ar ish v’loyos* as one is attached to his companion And this drew upon Moshe the supernal light until his face shone with the light of the Shechinah (Divine Presence). And whoever drew close to Moshe merited to see this light. But, the wicked and the scoffers in Israel, who were ruled by “the small hand”, did not merit to see this light, for if they had seen it, they would have been completely nullified by it. Only those who humbled themselves before Moshe Rebbeinu with wholeheartedness and simplicity, and believed that all of Moshe’s words were not simple, merited to see this light. And this is the allusion in Hashem placing His “hand” upon Moshe’s face and from this, Moshe’s face became radiant. It was precisely the “hand”; for it was revealed to Moshe how “the supernal hand” nullifies the “small hand” of this world that hides the light of the Tzaddik. And when a person moves the “small hand” away and always contemplates the “hand of Hashem” which is found in everything, he receives the ability to overcome the wicked and the scoffers and to see the light of the Tzaddik. And Moshe Rebbeinu received the rays of light precisely with the second set of Tablets, which was immediately after he succeeded in gaining forgiveness for Israel for the sin of the Golden Calf. For this sin was due to the great abundance of silver and gold they had, which is the “small coin”, as our holy Sages have said (Talmud Berachos 32a) on the verse (Devarim 1) “*V’Di zahav* (zahav is Hebrew for gold)”: “Moshe said before the Holy One Blessed is He, ‘Master of the world, it was the silver and gold that you bestowed upon Israel until they said ‘*Di* (enough)’ that caused them to make the calf.” But, as soon as they removed from their eyes the “small coin”, they could see the great light of the Tzaddik that shone throughout the entire world. This is also the allusion in the beginning of the parsha regarding the mitzvah of the Half Shekel, as it is written (Shemos 30): “This they shall give”. And Rashi explains: “He showed Moshe a kind of coin made of fire, the weight of which was half a shekel and said to him, ‘Like this shall they give.’ ” For Hashem showed Moshe Rebbeinu that the rectification for the “small coin” which blinds the eyes from seeing the light of the Tzaddik who is the *Rosh B’nei Yisrael* (the Head of the Children of Israel) which is hinted to in the verse (ibid) “*Ki sisa es ‘Rosh B’nei Yisrael’* (When you take a census of the Children of Israel; literally, “When you lift up the head of the Children of Israel”), the first letters of which spell “*Rebbe*” (Lekutei Mohoran, Part I, Lesson 111) - the rectification for this is “the coin of fire”, which changes the physical *keseif* (money) into spiritual money, that is, the *kisufim* (yearning and longing) for Hashem, and then a person will merit to see the light of the Tzaddik in truth. [Note: The word for money – *keseif* – comes from the word *kisufim* which means “longing or yearning” as in the

verse (Bereishis 31): “Because you have greatly longed (*nichsof nichsafta*) for your father’s house.”]

And this is the verse: “Moshe finished speaking with them and placed a mask on his face.” We need to understand why Moshe Rebbeinu needed to cover his face with a mask. Those who saw his great light and benefited from his radiance, their days were illuminated with the light of the Tzaddik and they didn’t need a mask. And those who did not merit seeing his great light saw nothing. If so, why was the mask necessary? According to the words ofbbe Nachman we can understand it very well. When a person draws close to the Tzaddik, a mask and a covering are needed to protect his “eyes” from being “blinded” by the abundance of light, because not every time can a person see and understand the light of the Tzaddik. Only when Moshe Rebbeinu would speak with the Jewish people and reveal to them the teachings of Hashem, would they look at the light of his face, and the rays of light would shine on their souls. But, at all other times, Moshe Rebbeinu would cover his face with a mask so that the people would not stumble through the abundance of light. And all of this is due to the power of the *Samech-Mem* (the Satan) that strengthens evil and impurity in the world and causes the wicked and the scoffers to mock and ridicule the Tzaddik’s light. For the Tzaddik unites the Next World with This World and brings Hashem’s light from all the upper worlds down into This World. And this unification is represented by the combination of the two letters – **Vav** and **Hey** - of Hashem’s four-letter name. The **Vav** (numerical value 6) represents the six higher *Sefiros* from *Chessed* to *YeSod*. And the **Hey** is Malchus (Kingship, the last Sefirah), which is the ability to perceive Hashem from within the physicality of This World. And the Tzaddik is constantly involved in bringing both worlds together. Corresponding to this, the *Samech-Mem* is trying to disconnect the two worlds and conceal the light of the Tzaddik. And sometimes he accomplishes this precisely through an over-abundance of light, which seduces a person to look at the Tzaddik and think about his ways with a jaundiced eye, as if he needs to understand all the ways of the Tzaddik despite his deficient knowledge and understanding. And in this way, his “eyes become blind”, G-d forbid. Therefore, the Hebrew word for the mask with which Moshe Rebbeinu covered his face is *masveh* (*Mem-Samech-Vav-Hey*). It is composed of the two pairs of letters mentioned above: The first two letters – *Mem* and *Samech* – are the same letters which make up the name of the force of evil in the world (the *Samach-Mem*) and the last two letters are *Vav* and *Hey*, which represent the upper and lower worlds, respectively. So the word *masveh* hints to the fact that the *Samach-Mem* wants to separate the Next World (*Vav*) from

This World (*Hey*). And this is why the Tzaddik needs to cover his face with a *masveh*. The *masveh* gives every person who wants to draw close to the Tzaddik the ability to benefit from the Tzaddik's great light. And Hashem should help us to be close to the true Tzaddikim and to draw upon ourselves their great light until we merit to ascend and be included in Hashem completely, now and forever. *Amen v'amen*.