

Seuda Shlishis, Parshas Nossah, 5766

At the third Shabbos meal, Mohorosh Shlit"va spoke inspiring words on the topic of why some people oppose, disgrace and insult pious Jews, based on *Lekutei Mohoran*, Part I, Lesson 28.

Rebbe Nachman says: "People who oppose, disgrace and insult pious Jews, do so because they have received their Torah knowledge from Jewish 'demon' Torah scholars. For Jewish 'demon' Torah scholars receive their Torah knowledge from the demons that have a fallen Torah from fallen *alephs*. Regarding these *alephs* it is written (*Melachim I*, ch. 5): 'And he [King Solomon] spoke three thousand (*alaph-im*; the plural of *aleph*) proverbs and his songs were five and a thousand (*aleph*).' For Shlomo merited this wisdom through holiness. Jewish 'demon' Torah scholars receive their knowledge from these *alephs* but through spiritually impure means. As a result, all of their words are said in the form of proverbs, metaphors and brilliant logic, for the root of their words is from the above mentioned *alephs*." (These are the words of Rebbe Nachman.)

Mohorosh explained that Rebbe Nachman reveals to us in this lesson the root of the opposition against the truly G-d-fearing Jews. It would seem only natural and proper for people to feel much shame and humility in the presence of truly G-d fearing Jews. As a result, they would honor them and hold them in very high esteem. For when they would take an honest look at their own spiritual and moral standing and how they are very far from true attachment to Hashem compared to the moral level and attachment of G-d-fearing Jews, they would naturally feel it only proper to honor and love the truly pious Jews very much. But the reason why they turn into adversaries who only know how to disgrace and insult is because they receive their Torah knowledge from Jewish 'demons', that is, from Torah scholars who themselves receive their Torah from the demons. And demons are creatures that damage the world, their only desire and aim being to harm people, G-d forbid. And because these Torah scholars receive their Torah from the demons, the only thing they can accomplish with their Torah knowledge is to harm people and to inspire them to disgrace and insult G-d-fearing

Jews. Their teachings stem from the fallen *alephs* alluded to in the five *alephs* which comprise the first letters of the words (*Shemos*, ch. 15): “*Amar oyeiv erdof asig achaleik shallal* (The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, overtake, divide the spoil’).” From the side of holiness these five *alephs* allude to the *Aluf* of the world (The *Master* of the world) who is found everywhere, even in the words of the enemy who says, “I will pursue, overtake, etc.” Hashem is also found there, as it is brought in the name of the holy Baal Shem Tov in the book *Toldos Yakov Yosef*. But from the side of spiritual impurity, they are words of the evil inclination and the demons – a person’s main enemies – which say, “I will pursue, overtake, divide the spoils, etc.” They pursue the Tzaddikim and the G-d-fearing Jews with the aim to disgrace and insult them.

The Torah has two powers. It has the power to be a potion of life or a potion of death. One who learns Torah in order to strengthen and encourage himself and others, in order to teach each and every person that there is hope for them to fix their deeds and to return in perfect *teshuvah* to Hashem, such a person receives his Torah from the *alephs* of holiness. And he finds hints everywhere in the Torah for how to bring people closer to Hashem. In such a person’s hands, the Torah is a potion of life. This is not the case for one who learns Torah for the sake of showing off his knowledge or in order to insult and disgrace people with his learning. The talks he gives to people are full of insults and ridicule and his listeners are made to feel there is no hope for them because of the multitude of their evil deeds. They are also made to believe that their judgment is already sealed for punishment in *gehinnom*. A teacher like this receives his Torah knowledge from the fallen *alephs*, that is, from the demons whose function is to damage the world. He goes after Jewish souls in order to weaken and destroy their hope and strength. And he goes after the truly G-d-fearing people in order to insult and disgrace them. In such a person’s hands, the Torah turns into a potion of death and he actually performs the deeds of the demons that seek to harm people. As a result, this is what he does with his Torah knowledge: He brings proofs from the whole breadth and depth of the Torah to make people’s knees buckle and to distance them from the possibility of doing *teshuvah*. He is imitating the heretics who

also bring ‘proofs’ from the Torah for their defiled views. Therefore, one needs to guard himself very much from such Torah scholars and he should beg Hashem to save him from them and their followers.

Distinguishing between true Torah scholars and Jewish ‘demon’ Torah scholars is without a doubt a very difficult test for people. For both of them externally look the same. They both wear the garb of Torah scholars. And they both fill their lectures with parables, metaphors and brilliant logic. So how is it possible to tell them apart? There are two main ways to make the distinction. 1). Are his words built and established on the strong foundations of the holy Torah; not on his own fantasies and visions, which happens to be very popular in our times? There are people who dress themselves up in the garb of Torah scholars and in the garb of kabbalists, and then proceed to give over lectures of falsehood, based on what they claim to have seen in the upper worlds or in a dream or in a vision. But it is all emptiness and an evil spirit because their words have no source or foundation in Torah; rather, it is all from their hearts, in accordance with their own vain imaginings. 2). Are his words of Torah said in order to strengthen and encourage people, to inspire them to the service of Hashem or are they said to weaken and break their spirits with harsh rebuke. As soon as people hear from the mouth of a talented speaker that a certain person or type of person has no hope or way to fix himself, they should know that this man’s Torah comes from the fallen *alephs* and from the Jewish ‘demons’; and they need to distance themselves from him as much as possible.

It once happened that two young Torah scholars came to Reb Nosson and related to him that they had just listened to a Torah class given by a certain famous *maggid* (speaker). They told Reb Nosson that when the *maggid* noticed they weren’t moved or inspired by his words, he interrupted his speech, turned to them and said, “Let me give you an analogy. A *maggid* such as myself is like a blacksmith who takes the bellows and pumps air onto a tiny spark of fire that was already there until he fans it into a roaring blaze. But if there is no spark, there is nothing to fan. It is the same with the two of you. There is no spark in you. Therefore, there is nothing with which to inspire you.” So these

two young scholars were left very discouraged and depressed from the *maggid's* words. They came and related to Reb Nosson what he said. Reb Nosson answered these young men that what this *maggid* said to them is just not so; every Jew has a spark – no matter who he is – it is just that not everyone is qualified to fan it into a flame. And he said in Yiddish, referring to the *maggid*, “You are not my blacksmith.” For not everyone who has the talent to create parables and dazzle people with his brilliant logic receives his Torah from the *alephs* of holiness. And not everyone knows how to fan Jewish souls into a roaring fire. There are people who receive their Torah from the demons. Therefore, there is no need to be bothered by the speech of anyone who ‘proves’ from the Torah that a Jew doesn’t have a spark of holiness, for it is just not so. Every Jew has a spark. One only needs to know how to inspire it and how to ignite it. Therefore, happy is the one who merits to be close to a true Rebbe and Tzaddik, whose every word of Torah is geared to inspire and lift up Jewish souls from their falls. And from such a teacher, one will receive the hope and optimism that will enable him to return to Hashem in truth and to attach himself to the Life of life. Happy is he and fortunate is his lot.

Mohorosh connected these ideas of Rebbe Nachman to our parsha in the following way. It is written at the end of the parsha (*Bamidbar*, ch. 7): “When Moshe came to the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, he heard the Voice speaking to him from atop the Ark Cover that is upon the Ark of the Testimony, from between the two Cherubs, and He spoke to him.” Rashi explains on this verse that when there are two verses which seem to contradict each other there comes a third verse to reconcile them and our verse is a case in point. One verse says (*Vayikra*, ch. 1): “And Hashem called to Moshe and spoke to him out of the Tent of Meeting”, which was outside of the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy. And another verse says (*Shemos*, ch. 28): “I will speak to you from above the Ark Cover [i.e., within the curtain].” Our verse in our parsha comes and reconciles them: Moshe entered the Tent of Meeting and there he heard the Voice coming from atop the Ark Cover from between the two Cherubs. The Voice would go out from Heaven to the space between the two Cherubs and from there it would go out to the Tent of Meeting where it was heard by

Moshe (These are the words of Rashi). Perhaps this Rashi alludes to the above teachings of Rebbe Nachman. The difficulty in discerning between a true Torah scholar and a Jewish 'demon' Torah scholar can be compared to two verses which contradict each other and we do not know how to reconcile them. This one says that he receives his teachings from heaven and this one says he receives his teachings from heaven. How can we know who is telling the truth? But then comes a third verse which decides between the two. This is what is written: **“When Moshe came to the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, he heard the Voice speaking to him from atop the Ark Cover that is upon the Ark of the Testimony, from between the two Cherubs, and He spoke to him”** - the true Torah scholar who is an aspect of Moshe receives his words **“from atop the Ark Cover that is upon the Ark of the Testimony”** - the Ark of the Testimony which is where the Torah rests. The first condition is that all of the scholar's words must be built and established on the strong foundations of the Holy Torah and not on vague imaginings and visions of falsehood. And the second condition is **“he heard the Voice speaking to him”** – all of the words said to him were in order to inspire and strengthen him in the ways of holiness and not to distance him and weaken him, G-d forbid. This is how we know that the Voice from above has clothed itself in the words of the Torah scholar – the voice of the holy angels and not of the demons and the evil spirits, G-d forbid. And this is how the Baal Haturim explains the verse: **“from between the two Cherubs (*mi'bein shnei hakeruvim*)”** – the first letters spell 'Moshe' to teach us that he is considered as a Cherub from above. For the holy angels clothe themselves in the voices of the true Torah scholars who are an aspect of Moshe. And these scholars wake up and inspire Jewish souls to a supreme cleaving to Hashem. And may Hashem help us to be close to the true Tzaddikim and to always hear their holy voices until we merit to return in perfect *teshuvah* before Him, to be included in Him completely for now and evermore. *Amen v'amen.*