

Seudah Shlishis, Parshas Tzav, Shabbos HaGadol 5766

At the third Shabbos meal, Mohorosh Shlit"z spoke inspiring words on the significance of the Shabbos before Pesach which is known as *Shabbos Hagadol* ("The Great Shabbos"). He also spoke about Elijah the prophet based on Lekutei Mohoran, Part I, Lesson 117.

It is written in this week's *Haftarah* (Malachi 3): "Behold! I am sending to you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great (*Hagadol*) and awesome day of Hashem." Our rabbis give many reasons for why we call the Shabbos before Pesach "*Shabbos Hagadol*". One of the reasons is that it is named after the word *Hagadol* in this verse, since during the entire month of Nissan and especially around Pesach time we feel a special yearning for the coming of Elijah the prophet who will announce the redemption, as our holy Sages have said (Talmud Rosh Hashanah 11a): "In the month of Nissan our forefathers in Egypt were redeemed and in Nissan we will be redeemed in the future." And a verse that shows the connection between the Exodus and the future redemption is (Micha 7): "As in the days of your coming out of the land of Egypt I will show him (Israel) wonders."

Let's now try to understand the idea behind the tradition that Elijah will come before Moshiach; in particular, how will Elijah prepare the world to greet Moshiach? It is explained in the words of Rebbe Nachman (Lekutei Mohoran, Part I, Lesson 117) that Elijah comes to push away falsehood and to bring near the truth, as our holy Sages have said in a Mishnah which speaks about truth (Tractate Aid'yos 8:7):

"Rebbi Yehoshua said: '...Elijah only comes to push away those who are close and to bring near those who are far away...' [The Sages are speaking here about distancing people from falsehood and bringing them close to the truth, as our Sages explain in Talmud Shabbos 104, that falsehood is called 'close' because in this world it is always near, readily available and easy to swallow; but truth is harder to come by and less likely to be accepted, and in this sense it is 'far'] Rebbi Yehuda said: 'To bring near but not to push away.' Rebbi Shimon said: 'To straighten out disputes.' [Elijah will come to nullify hatred and controversy and to make Shalom in the world, as it is stated in the continuation of this Mishnah]: And the majority of the Sages say: 'Not to push away and not to bring near, but to make Shalom in the world,' as it is

written: ‘Behold! I am sending to you Elijah the prophet, before the great and awesome day of Hashem. He shall return the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers...’”

In this Mishnah, it seems as though the rabbis are arguing over what Elijah is coming to do. But they are not really arguing, because as soon as Elijah has made Shalom in the world (the majority opinion), falsehood will flee by itself and the truth will be brought near, and there will be no room at all to lie. For the main strength of falsehood is when there is controversy. And when there is controversy, one of the sides is bound to lie. But as soon as there is Shalom in the world, everybody will acknowledge the truth and admit it to their fellow and then the world will be rectified, as it is explained in the words of Rebbe Nachman (Lekutei Mohoran, Part I, Lesson 27): “When there is Shalom in the generation, it is possible to draw the whole world to the service of Hashem, to serve Him with one consent.” For when Shalom exists between people, they are able to search for the truth together and to find it and explain it to each other. In this way, everyone will throw away their false idols of silver and gold and they will bring themselves close to the truth.

When Rebbe Nachman was in the city of Tiberias in Israel, the Tzaddikim there made a great festive meal for him in his honor. At the meal, someone posed the following question to all of the Tzaddikim there: In the Talmud, when our Sages are unable to determine what the law is in a given case they say, “Let it rest until Elijah comes.” The law of the Torah is that one witness is not allowed to testify in monetary cases. In such cases, a minimum of two witnesses is required before testimony can be given. But, we find that the Sages give the answer “Let it rest until Elijah comes” even in cases of monetary disputes when they are unable to determine which, if any, of the two parties is responsible for damages. So how can the Sages say “Let it rest until Elijah comes” in monetary cases when Elijah is only one witness, and the testimony of one witness is not accepted in monetary cases! Nobody had an answer until the question was posed to Rebbe Nachman. He answered them as follows: “Is it not explained in the words of our holy Sages that Elijah will push away falsehood and bring near the truth and that he will make Shalom in the world? If so, then when Elijah comes, the one in the wrong will automatically come and admit to the truth. And as we know the law is that when a person admits his own guilt in court, even though it is only the testimony of one witness, we accept it like the testimony of one hundred witnesses.” And they all rejoiced when they heard Rebbe Nachman’s answer.

We see that Elijah is all about uprooting falsehood and hatred from the world. And when this wondrous Shalom will exist in the world, all creatures will be ready to receive Moshiach as one man with one heart. For when there is hatred and controversy, it is impossible to reconcile people's wildly different opinions, and therefore it is also impossible to accept Moshiach, since each person says, "If Moshiach is not from my group, then I am not prepared to accept him as king." And let us not forget that the main cause of the Egyptian exile was that there were provocateurs and slanderers amongst the people (see Rashi on Shemos 2:14). But, as soon as there is Shalom in the world, and everybody is busy only seeking Hashem, for He is the essence of truth, as it is written (Jeremiah 10), "And Hashem G-d is truth", then all of the divisiveness and controversies will be nullified and everybody will be of one consent, like one man with one heart, and they will accept Moshiach upon themselves as king to take them out of *galus* (exile). Therefore it is simply understood why we need Elijah to come before Moshiach, for by means of the Shalom that Elijah will make in the world, people will be ready to accept Moshiach as king, and they will all join hands to serve Hashem in truth. And may Hashem let us see the coming of Elijah the prophet and the revelation of our righteous Moshiach, swiftly in our days. Amen v'amen.