

Seuda Shlishis, Parshas Bamidbar, 5766

At the third Shabbos meal, Mohorosh Shlit"va spoke inspiring words on the subject of "elevating fear to its root", what it means and how we can do it, based on *Lekutei Mohoran*, Part I, Lesson 15.

Rebbe Nachman says: "If you want to have a taste of the hidden light, that is, the secrets of the Torah that are destined to be revealed when Moshiach comes, then you must elevate fear to its root. And with what do you elevate the trait of fear? You do so with judgment. This means that you judge yourself with regard to all of your deeds and activities. By doing this, you will free yourself from all fears. And then pure and refined fear will prevail, and the only remaining fear will be the fear of Hashem. When a person does not judge himself, then he will be judged from Heaven, for 'If there is no judgment below, then there is judgment Above [*Sifri Parshas Shoftim*]. And when a person is judged from Heaven, the judgment clothes and disguises itself in all things. And all things become messengers of the Omnipresent to carry out against a person the written judgment, as our Sages have said [*Talmud Nedarim 41a*]: 'When one is judged by Heaven then everything becomes a messenger and servant to carry out the verdict against him.' But when one judges himself and there is judgment below, then there is no judgment Above and fear will not clothe itself in any object in order to wake a person up [to teshuvah], for the person wakes himself up. When a person is afraid of something, whether the source of the fear is some person in a position of authority, or a dangerous criminal, etc., this comes about because fear has clothed itself in one of these objects. For if fear had not clothed itself in the object, then it would have had no power to cause a person to be afraid.....The root of fear is knowledge – for one must *know* from whom to fear – and when one attains knowledge, he merits to comprehend the Torah as it is written (*Mishlei*, ch. 8): 'I, wisdom, am neighbor to shrewdness', that is, the Torah is a neighbor of the man of wisdom, as it is written (*Daniel*, ch. 2): 'He gives wisdom to the wise.' But there are two aspects to the Torah: the revealed aspect and the concealed aspect. A person will not merit the hidden aspect except in the future world. Nevertheless, even in this world, one can merit the hidden aspect through total dedication and

devotion in prayer. And one merits prayer through the revealed Torah, for the revealed Torah is an aspect of Sinai, as our Sages have said (*Talmud Brachos* 64a): “*Sinai* is a name given to a Torah scholar with vast knowledge”. And the concept of *Sinai* is the aspect of smallness and humility as our Sages have said (*Talmud Sota* 5a) that Hashem turned down all of the other mountains and only gave the Torah on Mt. Sinai. And the Sages say (ibid 5b) that the prayer of the one who is small in his own eyes is not despised as it is written (*Tehillim*, ch 51): ‘A broken and humbled heart, G-d, You will not despise.’ And through prayer with devotion where one nullifies all of one’s materialism with no boundary or limit as to what should be nullified - and when there is no boundary, then one can comprehend the Torah of the future world, which is unbounded and which can never be circumscribed by any boundary.” (These are the words of Rebbe Nachman.)

Mohorosh explained that in this lesson Rebbe Nachman reveals to us how a person can merit even today the revelation of the secrets of the Torah of the future world. This Torah is called the “Torah of the Ancient Hidden One (*Lekutei Mohoran*, Part I, Lesson 33)”, that is, the teachings of “*Atik* (ancient)” which are the first three *Sefiros* of the *Sefira of Kesser*. The *Sefira of Kesser* is divided into three parts, the first three are called “*Atik*” and the lower seven are called “*Arich* (long)”. And the revelation of *Atik* is the revelation of G-dliness in an open and very exalted way where a person sees only complete G-dliness from each and every detail of creation. And this is the category of the revelation of *Yechida of Yechida* (Oneness of Oneness), where a person totally nullifies himself within the Infinite Light, and he sees before his eyes only the essence of the revelation of Hashem’s G-dliness. But this matter will only be revealed some time in the future with the coming of our righteous Moshiach. For Moshiach will reveal wondrous teachings like these until everyone will merit a clear perception of G-dliness. However, even today, to the degree that a person elevates the trait of fear to its root, the more he will be able to taste the hidden light, that is, he will taste the secrets of the Torah that will be revealed in the future, and he will draw down upon himself a sweet and wondrous light, literally a taste of the world to come.

The matter of elevating fear to its root involves refining and purifying the trait of fear until no external fear remains at all. This means he will not be afraid of any person, whether he is a powerful ruler or a criminal, nor of any dangerous animal. Because he has only pure fear of Hashem, he will fear nothing but the splendor of His glory since He is the master and ruler of all the worlds. However, it is impossible to acquire this higher fear except through the trait of judgment. And this is part of the service of *hisbodedus* that Rebbe Nachman has taught us - that a person should judge himself every day as to whether or not his actions are proper and in accordance with the will of Hashem. People can live their entire lives without any *cheshbon hanefesh* (an accounting of one's soul). All of their ways seem straight and proper in their eyes. And they will not permit the threatening thought to enter their heads that there may be much to fix in their lives. But when a person makes an accounting every day between himself and his Maker with prayer and *hisbodedus*, reflecting deeply on all of his deeds, he will start to see what he has damaged and what he needs to repair. In this way, he exempts himself from all types of judgments from Above, as our holy Sages have said (*Sifri Parshas Shoftim*) "When there is judgment below there is no judgment Above". This means that if a person passes judgment on himself below with regard to all of his deeds, then the trait of Heavenly judgment does not need to judge him from Above. Also, fear no longer needs to clothe itself in any powerful ruler or judge or dangerous animal or criminal, because the person has already awoken *himself* to the trait of holy fear. But when there is no judgment below, there is judgment Above as the trait of fear clothes itself in everything to frighten him and to wake him up to the trait of holy fear and *teshuvah*. And then all types of trials and tribulations pass over him from the side of Heavenly judgment. Therefore, happy is the one who judges himself every day, for in this way, he frees himself from all types of external fears and merits to raise up the pure and clear fear of Hashem.

When one merits to acquire the trait of elevated fear, he thereby merits the revelation of knowledge. For the essence of knowledge is to know and recognize Hashem, as it is written (*Devarim*, ch. 4): "You have been shown that you might know that Hashem, He is the G-d, there is

no [power] other than He.” And this knowledge is of one piece with the trait of fear. Fear is in the heart as our holy Sages have said (*Talmud Kiddushin* 32b): “Regarding something that is hidden in the heart the Torah always says ‘and you shall fear your G-d.’ ” And knowledge is also in the heart as it is written (*Devarim*, ch. 29): “And He has not given you a heart to know.” For the main thing is to *know* what to fear. And that is the splendor of Hashem’s glory and nothing else. Therefore, fear and knowledge are closely related and one depends on the other.

When one merits the revelation of knowledge, he merits the ability to comprehend the Torah. For in order to comprehend the Torah one needs knowledge as it is written (*Daniel*, ch. 2): “He gives wisdom to the wise.” But there are two general levels of comprehending the Torah, namely, the revealed level and the hidden level. Everyone can merit to acquire the revealed part of the Torah through diligent study. But few people merit to understand the hidden aspects of the Torah, since it is in the category of the “Torah of the Ancient Hidden One” that is destined to be revealed only in the future world. These are the secrets of the Torah which uncover the inwardness of Hashem’s G-dliness concealed in all of the details of creation, and not every mind can withstand these revelations. Nevertheless, by nullifying one’s selfishness while praying with devotion, a person can merit, even today, the revelation of the Torah of the future world. For as soon as one prays with devotion, nullifying one’s materialistic desires without any limits or boundaries as to what should be nullified, he becomes capable of comprehending the Torah of the future world, which is also without limits or boundaries. Therefore, one should start with learning the revealed parts of the Torah. For through learning the revealed Torah for its own sake, the precious trait of humility enters a person. And humility is an aspect of Mt. Sinai, as our holy Sages have said (*Talmud Sota* 5b): “Hashem turned down all of the mountains and only gave the Torah on Mt. Sinai because it made itself small.” And as soon as humility enters a person, his prayer takes on tremendous power and significance, as our holy Sages have said (*ibid*): “The prayer of the low one is not despised as it is written (*Tehillim*, ch. 51): ‘A broken and humbled heart, G-d, You will not despise.’ ” And then a person becomes capable of praying with total devotion and of nullifying

completely his feelings of greatness and self-importance. Next, he merits the revelation of the hidden aspects of the Torah, which is the “Torah of the Ancient Hidden One”. We find that all of these ideas are connected with one another: the revealed Torah emplaces humility within a person, which allows him to pray with total devotion, which in turn enables him to merit the hidden wisdom of the Torah, the revelation of the Torah of the world to come. Happy is the one who truly merits all of this!

The matter of praying with total devotion and nullifying all of one’s feelings of self-importance and materialism, is also explained in the above section of the Talmud on the verse (Isaiah, ch. 26): “ ‘My dead bodies shall arise. Wake up and sing those who dwell in the dust.’ This is the one who makes himself a neighbor to the dust in his life.” For the main perfection of a person is that he merits to such a true self-nullification that it will seem in his own eyes that he is already neighbors with the dust and that he is lying down within it. It is a great service for a person to picture the day of his death and how they will bury him and how he will lay in the grave alone (*Sichos HaRan* # 109). At that time he will have nothing left but his attachment to Hashem’s blessed light. However, to reflect upon these thoughts sometimes requires more than a little self-sacrifice since it is a very great fear, as Reb Nosson related about Rebbe Nachman (*Sichos HaRan* #57): “In his youth he was very afraid of death. But he would still picture the day of death and this was an act of self-sacrifice for him.” When a person accustoms himself to think of his final and eternal destination, and how his body will have to lay in the grave and nothing will remain for him but the attachment of his soul to Hashem’s blessed light, then true humility will enter him and he will merit the revelation of the secrets of the Torah even in his lifetime. Therefore, happy is the one who internalizes these ideas and thinks well about his final and eternal end, for then he will taste the World to Come in his lifetime and he will merit to be attached to Hashem with a true and eternal attachment in this world and the next forever and ever. Happy is he and fortunate is his lot.

Mohorosh connected these ideas to our parsha in the following way. We find that the book of *Bamidbar* (In the Desert) begins with the verse: **“Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Sinai desert (b’Midbar Sinai).”** The book of Vayikra ends with the verse (*Vayikra*, ch 27): **“These are the mitzvos that Hashem commanded Moshe to the Children of Israel at Mt. Sinai.”** It is brought in the Torah commentaries (see *Baal HaTurim* and the commentary of the *Shach* on this verse) that the juxtaposition of these two verses comes to teach us that if a person does not make himself like a desert, he will not be able to know the Torah and the commandments. This is precisely the message of Rebbe Nachman here. That by starting with learning the revealed parts of the Torah, which is the verse **“These are the mitzvos that Hashem commanded Moshe to the Children of Israel”**, one comes to the category of **“at Mt. Sinai”**, which is the trait of humility. And then one can come to the level of being able to pray with total devotion, which leads to being able to comprehend the inside and hidden parts of the Torah. And this is the beginning of the book of *Bamidbar* – **“Hashem spoke to Moshe”** – which is the revelation of the inwardness of His G-dliness from all of creation and this is accomplished through the category of **“in the Sinai desert”**, which is prayer with total devotion when a person makes himself like a desert which is available and free to everyone, and with the utmost humility like Sinai, like one who literally dwells in the dust, and then the secrets of the Torah of the future world will be revealed to him - the **“Torah of the Ancient Hidden One”**. Therefore, we always read parshas Bamidbar before Shavuot to hint to us that the main way to acquire the inwardness of the Torah is through the category of **“Bamidbar”** which is prayer with total devotion through which one nullifies himself without limit. And then he will truly merit to acquire the Torah. And may Hashem help us to receive upon ourselves the holiness of these days, and to receive the Torah literally as new, until we merit to return in perfect *teshuvah* before him, to be included in him completely, now and forever. *Amen v’amen.*