

Seuda Shlishis, Parshas Bhaloscha, 5766

At the third Shabbos meal, Mohorosh Shlit"va spoke inspiring words about the great benefits that come from *limud haTorah* (the mitzvah of learning Torah), based on *Lekutei Mohoran*, Part I, Lesson 1.

Rebbe Nachman says: “Know, that through the Torah all the prayers which we pray and all the requests that we make are accepted; and Israel’s charm, grace and importance are enhanced and exalted before all those who Israel needs – whether the need is spiritual or physical. Now unfortunately, due to our many sins, Israel’s true charm, grace and importance have fallen. For at the present time, the main importance and charm is found with the other nations. But through the Torah, Israel’s charm and importance will be enhanced, for the Torah is called (*Mishlei*, ch. 5): ‘A loving hind and a graceful doe [*Ayeles ahavim v’ya’alas chein*; a graceful doe – *ya’alas chein* – also means “to confer charm and grace”], because it bestows charm and grace upon those who learn her (*Talmud Eirubin*, 54b). And when one has charm and grace, all his prayers and requests are accepted.” (These are the words of Rebbe Nachman.)

Mohorosh explained that we learn in this lesson that the main charm and grace of the Jewish nation in general, and of the individual Jew in particular, comes through the holy Torah. For the Torah bestows grace and importance upon all who occupy themselves with it. And the one who cleaves to the holy Torah shines brightly with a very great light and exudes a special charm which we can’t find anywhere else. Even though we see today that people’s estimation of Israel’s true grace and importance has fallen greatly; and we also find that the greatest charm and importance is ascribed to the other nations and to those who are distant from the Torah; despite all of this, the charm and importance possessed by those who have forsaken the Torah and mitzvos are not real charm and importance at all. For without Torah a person has nothing and his life is similar to that of an animal and at times like that of a dangerous beast. Such a life is even inferior to the animals in the sense that animals live exactly according to the nature that Hashem has implanted within them. But a human being with no Torah is always in great danger of going way beyond the bounds assigned to him by Hashem: by committing murder and theft and by harming people to a much greater extent than wild animals

are capable of. As we have seen throughout the generations, the nations of the world who did not accept the Noachide Laws of Hashem and disparaged and ridiculed the Torah, have pursued and afflicted the Jewish people with the harshest suffering – afflictions which are impossible to fully describe. And to our great shame, even some of our own brethren, who have forsaken and despised the Torah, have harbored great hatred for those who are dedicated to *limud haTorah* and the performance of mitzvos. They too have pursued and embittered the lives of faithful Jews, as our holy Sages have said (*Talmud Pesachim*, 49b): “Greater is the hatred of those who are ignorant of Torah for Torah scholars than the hatred of the nations of the world for Israel.” For without the Torah, a person has nothing. He lives with no real purpose, and this makes his life very bitter. So, although it appears as if he has a certain charm and importance due to his wealth, material prosperity and the honor that people show him, it is all vanity and emptiness, absolutely devoid of any permanence. For true charm, grace and importance are only possessed by those who are occupied with the Torah – those who toil to find Hashem in every detail of the days of their lives and strive to fulfill the purpose of their lives. And this purpose is to recognize and know Hashem, as it is written in the Zohar (*Parshas Bo*, 42a): “The entire creation was brought into being in order that we recognize Hashem.” This is what brings true charm and grace to a person and causes the light of his soul to shine with a very great radiance until he is elevated above the natural order of the world.

The main reason why people are distant from the Torah is because the Torah seems to be a tremendous burden to them. They see that there is so much to learn, so they end up learning nothing, as it is brought in the Midrash (*Devarim Rabbah* Ch. 8): “The fool enters the house of learning and sees a profusion of Torah: Tractate Shabbos with 24 chapters, Tractate *Keilim* with 30 chapters, etc.. He says to himself, ‘When will I learn all this?’ So he learns nothing. But the wise person says, ‘Who said we have to learn it all in one day. Today, I will learn one *halacha*, and tomorrow one *halacha* until I will have learned the entire Torah.’” And so our holy Sages have said (*Tanchumah Pinchas* Ch. 11): “Why is the Torah compared to a fig tree? Just as the fruit of a fig tree does not all ripen at the same time, but today one fig ripens here and tomorrow another fig there, so too are the words of Torah: they are not all learned in one day, but only little by little, a set amount each day.” This is the idea behind the system of learning that Rebbe Nachman has taught us (*Sichos HaRan*, #76): Every man should make a schedule for himself to learn a fixed amount in different areas of the Torah each day. And he should begin learning from the very beginning of a book, such as the *Tanach*, all the way through to

the end and he should not go back to earlier sections until he has gone through the entire *Tanach*. The same rule applies to learning *Mishnah* and *Gemara* as well as to all of the other holy books of the Torah. One should make a fixed schedule to learn a little bit every day, sticking to the order of the plan no matter what. And even when one encounters areas in his learning that he doesn't yet understand, he should not skip them; but he should read the words verbatim and continue following his daily schedule until he has completed the entire book from beginning to end. For through a gradual accumulation of learning and by finishing what one has started, unknowingly a great amount of Torah will be acquired and then one can return to the beginning of the book and learn everything another time. And the second time one learns any subject, one already understands more than he understood the first time around. And the third time through, one will understand even more, until he will be very well versed in the subject. This is an awesome and wonderful way to acquire Torah but it is only understood by those who have followed it. Those who do not deceive themselves but follow Rebbe Nachman's learning method with total sincerity and simplicity will merit to traverse most areas of the Torah and become well versed in them. And the Torah will bestow true charm and esteem upon him. This is not true for those who are wise in their own eyes and do not want to accept the words of Rebbe Nachman at face value. Instead, they fool themselves and say, "Rebbe Nachman couldn't have meant this literally. What he really meant was this..." Sadly, these people remain the same ignoramuses they were from the start, and true charm and grace will not be found with them, for without Torah a person ends up being idle and idleness has very serious negative effects on one's mental health. Our holy Sages have already said (*Talmud Kesubos*, 59b): "Idleness leads to psychosis and to lewdness." Without Torah a person is liable to commit all of the evils in the world, for the spirit of folly within him seduces him to sin, as our holy Sages have said (*Talmud Sotah* 2a): "A person does not commit a sin unless a spirit of folly enters him." But the holy Torah shields a person from all of this, for it graces him with true charm and importance until the spirit of folly flees from him. And he merits to feel a wonderful sweetness and pleasantness in his life, as it is written (*Mishlei*, 3): "Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace." For there is true pleasantness in the Torah and the goal is to merit to feel this pleasantness (*Lekutei Mohoran*, Part II, Lesson 71). And when one feels it, he will desire nothing else but the Torah itself and live a truly good life.

It is essential to always remember what Rebbe Nachman once said to Reb Nosson: "A little bit is also good." And Reb Nosson declared that this saying

emplaced within him true diligence in learning Torah. For when a person wants to learn, the *yetzer hara* comes to him and says, “See, you don't have much time to learn now, and your mind isn't settled properly. So, just put off your learning for a different time.” But when one knows the rule – “a little is also good” – then every bit of learning he can grab will be important and precious in his eyes, even without complete comprehension. In this way, he will learn another bit, and then another bit, until he has learned many pages. This is awesome advice for one who understands it, truly worth more than its weight in gold. Therefore, happy is the one who spends his days and years learning Torah, for in so doing, true charm, grace and importance will rest on him, and his soul will shine with a very great light until it can well be said of him that the entire world exists for his sake alone. And he will merit a glimpse of the World to Come in his lifetime. Happy is he and praiseworthy is his lot.

Mohorosh connected these teachings to our *parshah* in the following way. It is written (*Bamidbar*, ch. 8): “Speak to Aaron and say to him: ‘When you kindle the lamps (*beha'aloscha es haneiros*, lit. ‘when you elevate the lamps’) towards the face of the menorah the seven lamps shall give light.” Perhaps we can say that this verse can teach us about the great benefits of *limud haTorah*. The menorah represents the wisdom of the Torah as our holy Sages have said (*Talmud Baba Basra 25b*): “He who wants to become wise should pray towards the south (we actually pray facing east but the Sages mean to turn *slightly* towards the south as explained there in the *Gemara*). And your sign for this is the menorah which was situated in the south side of the Holy Temple.” And the verse reveals to us – “**When you kindle the lamps**” – when you want to kindle and elevate Jewish souls who are likened to a lamp, as it is written (*Mishlei*, 20): “The lamp of Hashem is the soul of *Adam*”, they must be “**towards the face of the menorah**” – that is, when they are facing the Torah their souls will shine, for the Torah will draw upon them a supernal grace and charm that will shine throughout the entire world. And then the entire creation will be humbled towards them, which is – “**the seven lamps**” – as it is brought in the *Baal HaTurim* that the seven lamps of the menorah correspond to the seven constellations. In other words, all of the constellations, through which the laws of nature are channeled, will shine and conduct themselves according to the will of the holy people who are occupied with learning and performing the will of Hashem, which is the holy Torah. For the Torah elevates them above the world. May Hashem help us to always be occupied in the Torah with mighty diligence and perseverance, and we will merit to draw down upon ourselves a supernal charm and grace, until we

ascend to be included in Him completely for now and evermore. Amen
v'amen.