

## Seuda Shlishis, Parshas Eykev, 5766

At the third Shabbos meal, Mohorosh *Shlit"á* spoke inspiring words on the subjects of the Land of Israel and Rosh HaShannah, based on *Lekutei Mohoran*, Part II, Lesson 40.

Rebbe Nachman says: “He who knows the significance of the Land of Israel, and has truly experienced a taste of the Land of Israel, can recognize in another person whether or not he had been together with a Tzaddik on Rosh HaShannah, and whether this was a great Tzaddik or not, or whether he himself is a Tzaddik...The essence of the special sanctity of the Land of Israel is due to Hashem’s Providence that is felt there acutely, that is, His constant overseeing of the Land of Israel, as it is written (*Devarim*, Ch. 11): ‘The eyes of Hashem your G-d are always upon it [the Land of Israel] from the beginning of the year until year end.’ And this [intense Divine Providence] causes the special sanctity of the Land of Israel. And because the eyes of Hashem are always upon the Land of Israel ‘the air of the Land of Israel [also] makes one wise (*Talmud Baba Basra*, 158a).’

However, why are ‘the eyes of Hashem always upon it [the Land of Israel]’? This is due to the souls of Israel, which Hashem takes pride in, which is an aspect of the verse (Isaiah, Ch. 49): ‘Israel, in you, I [Hashem] take pride.’ And through Hashem’s pride in the souls of Israel, the concept of *tefillin* emerges, as *tefillin* are called ‘pride’ (*Talmud Sukkah*, 25). Therefore we find the concept of donning *tefillin*, so to speak, by Hashem, as our Sages teach us (*Talmud Berachot* 6a): ‘From where do we know that Hashem dons *tefillin*? For it says (Isaiah, Ch. 62) Hashem swore ... by His strong hand, referring to the *tefillin* which are called ‘strength’. And what is written in the *tefillin* of Hashem? Who is like Your nation Israel, one nation in the Land.’ So we see that the pride of Hashem in Israel is the concept of His *tefillin*. The Ariza'l explains that *tefillin* represent the concept of intellect, and they penetrate [the intellect and the soul which is in the brain] and cause one’s [spiritual] eyes to open. So too, in regards to the *tefillin* of Hashem, for from the pride that Hashem takes in His holy nation – which is His *tefillin* – emerges His unique Providence over them and over the Land He gave them, which gives rise to the special sanctity of the Land of Israel. And therefore it is called the Land of **Israel** because it receives its sanctity from the concept of ‘**Israel**, in you, I

[Hashem] take pride'. And when a person is able to perceive this pride that Hashem takes in His people Israel, he also receives the concept of 'pride and intellect' and then the concept of *tefillin* emerges for him, penetrating the intellect and the soul which is in his brain and causing his spiritual eyes to open. And then his *own* eyes enter the category of 'the eyes of Hashem' – seeing Divine Providence everywhere – and so, every place he looks upon also enters the category of 'the air of the Land of Israel which makes one wise.'

And who is the one who has the ability to perceive the pride that Hashem takes in Israel? It is he who sees the person who brings people close to the service of Hashem and who is the main factor in the Jewish people's drawing close to their Father in Heaven – and this is the true Tzaddik. It turns out, that the Tzaddik himself is the pride which Hashem takes in His people. For it is through the service of the Tzaddik, that all of Israel's drawing close to Hashem and all of the pride that Hashem takes in them come about. Then, the one who sincerely observes the Tzaddik – particularly at a time when a large number of people gather around the Tzaddik, and especially on Rosh HaShanah when the gathering is very large – receives some of this pride, and the concept of *tefillin* and intellect emerge for him – the concept of 'the eyes of Hashem'. And then every place he looks upon becomes an aspect of the Land of Israel." (These are the words of Rebbe Nachman.)

Mohorosh explained that Rebbe Nachman reveals to us in this lesson wondrous secrets concerning the Land of Israel and concerning the pride that Hashem takes in the souls of Israel. The sanctity of the Land of Israel stems from the pride that Hashem takes in the souls of Israel, the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, who desired His closeness every moment of their lives. And this causes Hashem to take pride in them and to watch over them with "open eyes", that is, with very close personal supervision, and to bestow upon them every manner of blessing and kindness. And because of this, He gave them the Land of Israel, the land He chose from all lands and gave to the people He chose from all peoples. Therefore, regarding the Land of Israel it is written (*Devarim*, Ch. 11): "The eyes of Hashem your G-d are always upon it from the beginning of the year until year end", for there in the Land of Israel, Hashem's Providence is revealed to the greatest extent. And someone who comes to the Land of Israel and truly experiences the taste of the Land will be able to perceive the pride that Hashem takes in the souls of Israel when he sees the wondrous gift Hashem has given them, namely, the Land, and how He has exalted them above all the families of the earth as

Hashem's own children and representatives, and therefore, He watches over and personally supervises them down to the minutest detail of their lives, to satisfy all their needs, spiritually and materially.

This process of Hashem taking pride in Israel and the Divine Providence this pride engenders is taking place constantly through the service of the Tzaddikim, for the true Tzaddikim of the generation are always searching and seeking out merits on behalf of the souls of Israel. And they are always taking pride before Hashem in the Children of Israel, mainly over the fact that they are the people that Hashem has brought close and has sanctified to carry the banner of Hashem – to be a kingdom of *kohanim* and a holy nation. And the Tzaddikim know that no matter how far a Jew has fallen away from Hashem and His Torah, it is always fitting to have compassion on him and bring him close in every way.

And he who merits to be in the company of such a Tzaddik receives an amazing illumination from this pride that the Tzaddik takes in the souls of Israel, for the Tzaddik will also look upon *him* with his holy eyes and find in *him* his good points and take pride in him before the Throne of Glory. And this is especially true on Rosh HaShannah when everyone gathers together by the Tzaddik, for then the Tzaddik judges each and every one to the side of merit and intercedes on their behalf before the Throne of Glory, effecting for each one a good and sweet year. For on Rosh HaShannah, the day of awesome judgment, when each and every one is judged as to what will be with him the entire year, one needs a very great lawyer who will advocate expertly on his behalf and bring him out innocent in judgment. Therefore, we go to Tzaddikim on Rosh HaShannah and include ourselves in their holy gathering, for through this we are included in the pride that Hashem takes in His people Israel.

From the above discussion, we find that one who comes to a true Tzaddik on Rosh HaShannah becomes fit to actually feel the sanctity of the Land of Israel, for the Tzaddik transforms the atmosphere of the gathering into the holy air of the Land of Israel, for he draws down to this place the pride that Hashem takes in the souls of Israel and this pride draws down Hashem's Providence, and it is the special Divine Providence which is the essence of the sanctity of the Land of Israel, as mentioned before. Therefore, in the verse that speaks about the sanctity of the Land of Israel, we find that the sanctity of Rosh HaShannah is also mentioned, as it is written (*Devarim*, Ch. 11): “The eyes of Hashem your G-d are always upon it **‘from the beginning of the**

**year** (*me'Reishis HaShannah*)' until year end", for the sanctity of the Land of Israel and the sanctity of Rosh HaShannah are in essence one thing. Happy is the one who merits to be counted among the gathering of the Tzaddik on Rosh HaShannah, for then the special illumination of the Land of Israel will shine on him.

The main way the Tzaddikim try to defend and justify each and every Jew, no matter where he is holding in life, is with the argument that as a whole the Jewish people are on a higher moral level than any other nation. It is for this reason that we recite a blessing every day "Who has not made me a heathen", for even if I am unable to find within myself any good point, I am thankful that "I am not a heathen." Therefore, Rebbe Nachman admonishes us (*Lekutei Mohoran*, Part I, Lesson 282 and Part II, Lesson 10) that one should always try to be happy and to push away the sadness and bitterness, and the main happiness is that one has merited to be of the seed of Israel and not a heathen. And this is the way of the Tzaddikim; they are always trying to justify the souls of Israel before the Throne of Glory and to plead before Hashem that no matter how the Jew appears he is still part of the people of Hashem and this people is still on a higher moral level than any other people in the world, for "Who is like Your people Israel, one nation in the Land?"

Reb Nosson explains that this was the secret of Amos the prophet when he said (*Amos*, Ch. 9): "Are you not like the Children of Kush to me, Oh Children of Israel, said Hashem." This is surprising, that Hashem would liken the souls of Israel to the Children of Kush, the least of all the nations. However, there was at that time a great accusation in Heaven against the souls of Israel (see *Amos* there), and no matter how much Amos the prophet wanted to justify the Jewish people before the Heavenly court, the accusers would overturn his words. Therefore, Hashem made him reverse his words and say that if it is true that the souls of Israel are so fallen and lowly, then, behold, they are like the "Children of Kush", the least of all the nations, because as soon as the prophet likened them to the Children of Kush, everyone, including the heavenly court, was able to perceive clearly that there is still a great difference between the level of the Children and the level of the Children of Kush and the other nations. And then it became impossible for the accusers to arouse judgment against the souls of Israel. Therefore, happy is the one who always seeks out the good points within himself and within the souls of Israel, for in this way, the balance of the entire world will tilt to the side of merit and this merit will be attributed to him. Happy is he and fortunate is his lot.

Mohorosh connected the above ideas to our parsha in the following way. It is written (*Devarim*, Ch. 9): “Do not say in your heart when Hashem your G-d drives them out from before you, saying, ‘Because of my righteousness Hashem has brought me to possess this land and because of the wickedness of these nations Hashem drives them out from before you. Not for your righteousness and the uprightness of your heart do you go in to possess their Land; but because of the wickedness of these nations does Hashem your G-d drive them out from before you.” Let us ask the following question: Why is the holy Torah telling us here not to imagine that our inheriting the Land of Israel is due to our merits and acts of righteousness, but rather that it is due only to the wickedness of these nations? Isn’t it only proper for every one of us to find in ourselves merits and good points and to enliven and strengthen ourselves with our awareness of our good points? So why here when Israel was about to enter the Land does the Torah warn us that we should only think that our taking the land is due to the wickedness of the Canaanite nations? According to the teachings of Rebbe Nachman we can understand it very well. It was specifically when the Children of Israel were about to possess the Land – the Land where Hashem’s pride in the souls of Israel is revealed in the most open way – that Hashem wanted to preempt any accusation that might have been brought against the souls of Israel. Therefore, if they would have said that their possessing the Land was due to their merits and righteousness, it would have been possible for the accusers to point out their shortcomings as well as the flaws and imperfections in their good deeds and this would have prevented the good from coming to them. But now that they know that Hashem is driving out these nations because of *nations’* wickedness, therefore, no accusation in the world could have any effect, for even the least of all Jews, because of his being a part of the people of Hashem, when we compare their level to even the best of any other nation, we will immediately see his advantage and how it is impossible to bring accusations against him at all. Therefore, it is specifically concerning the inheritance of the Land of Israel, whose entire sanctity is built upon “Israel, in you will I take pride”, that the Torah reveals that the Jewish people should observe the wickedness of these nations, and then they will know their own level and why the sanctity of the Land of Israel is fitting for them. May Hashem help us draw down upon ourselves the sanctity of the Land of Israel; and our brothers, the Children of Israel, who dwell in the Land of Israel will be protected from the wickedness of the nations that want to swallow them, G-d forbid, and may we merit to soon see the redemption and salvation of Israel with the coming of our righteous Moshiach swiftly in our days. *Amen v’amen.*