

Friday Night, Parshas Lech Lecha, 5765

Friday night, at the first Shabbos meal, Mohorosh *Shlit"á* spoke inspiring words about the great importance of the character trait of *Shalom* (peace), based on *Lekutei Mohoran*, Part I, Lesson 33.

Rebbe Nachman says: “The general principle is that one should always seek *Shalom* – that there should be *Shalom* among the people of Israel; and there should be *Shalom* in each person within himself, that is to say, one should not be divided in his character traits irregardless of what happens to him in life. Rather, there should be no difference to him whether things are good or bad for him, for he will always find Hashem in it and praise Him for it. As King David says (*Tehillim*, Ch. 56): ‘With Hashem I will praise the matter, with *Elokim* I will praise the matter.’ Even in the face of the attribute of judgment (*Elokim*) I will praise Him.” (These are the words of Rebbe Nachman.)

Mohorosh explained that the character trait of *Shalom* is greater than any other attribute a person could have, as our holy Sages have said (end of *Mishnayot Uktzin*): “Hashem found no vessel to hold blessing for Israel other than *Shalom*”. *Shalom* is the main vessel within which all blessings are stored, for *Shalom* is one of Hashem’s names (*Talmud Shabbos* 10b). And the more a person is bound to the trait of *Shalom*, the more he is bound to Hashem, and being bound to Hashem is the ultimate perfection a person can attain in life.

The attribute of *Shalom* includes two main categories: 1) *Shalom* between people – between man and his fellow and between husband and wife, and 2) *Shalom* between a person and himself – between his different traits and dispositions, for with *all* of one’s traits and with *all* of one’s life circumstances one can serve Hashem. And the main service of every person in this world is to acquire the trait of *Shalom* in every matter. This is a divine service of huge proportions and one should toil all the days of one’s life to acquire it more and more. Attaining the trait of peace with all people, and in one’s home with one’s spouse is such a great divine service precisely because it is the nature of a person to be drawn after controversy and strife; and to mix into arguments that are not his own, which is in truth a great folly, for what will he get from these arguments besides anguish, pain and sorrow. And no profit will come from it, especially when the argument concerns the

community where one group is arguing with another and they are brought to a state of hatred, jealousy and even murder, may G-d save us. There is nothing more contemptible than this.

The main reason for the length of the exile is that the souls of Israel cannot unite with one another and thus at every moment they transgress the Torah prohibition of “you shall not hate your brother in your heart”. In this respect this prohibition is more severe than any other in the Torah, for with regard to the other prohibitions one only transgresses them for a moment and not non-stop all day long. But with the prohibition of “you shall not hate”, one transgresses it whenever he still has hate in his heart for his fellow. Therefore, a person needs to do everything possible to be at peace with his fellow man. And even though he is not obligated to believe as they do or to agree with their opinions, it is forbidden to hate them and to pursue them for “strife is hateful to G-d and great is peace (*Bereishis Rabbah*, Ch. 38)”. One needs to always be willing to sacrifice oneself for the trait of *Shalom*.

And this is the difference between a dispute for the sake of heaven and one that is not: a dispute for the sake of heaven is a dispute in *halacha* or *hashkafa*, as in the dispute between *Shammai* and *Hillel* – each one held in accordance with his own knowledge and understanding of the holy Torah and they did not budge from their views at all. But in their personal relationship with each other they showed only love, brotherhood, peace and friendship, as our holy Sages have said (*Talmud Yevamos* 13b): “The houses of *Shammai* and *Hillel* did not refrain from marrying into each other’s families, and they acted with truth and peace towards each other”, as the verse says “(*Zecharia*, Ch. 8) You shall love truth and peace”.

And precisely *this* is the sign that a dispute is for the sake of heaven: when there is no personal hatred between the disputants. This is not true of a dispute that is not for the sake of heaven. This type of dispute is one of hatred and jealousy, in which one person wishes to uproot the other from the world and is completely unable to tolerate him. This was the dispute of *Korach* and his assembly “(*Bemidbar*, Ch. 17)”. They were jealous of the greatness of *Moshe* and *Aharon* and wanted the glory for themselves. Our holy Sages were precise in the wording of the *mishnah* (*Pirkei Avos*, Ch. 5): “What type of dispute is for the sake of heaven? – The dispute of *Hillel* and *Shammai*. And what type was not for the sake of heaven? The dispute of *Korach* and his entire assembly.” The Sages did not write, “The dispute of *Korach* and *Moshe*” as they wrote in reference to “the dispute of *Hillel* and *Shammai*”,

because *Moshe* had a dispute with no one. On the contrary, he was at peace with everybody, for *Moshe Rebbeinu's* trait of *Shalom* was whole and complete. It was *Korach* who contended with *Moshe* and he seduced his entire assembly to also contend with him. And because they were all far from the trait of *Shalom*, therefore, even among themselves strife was rampant and this is why our Sages labeled it “the dispute of *Korach* and his entire assembly”. Although, on a superficial level, they were able to unite against *Moshe Rebbeinu*. The Tzaddikim themselves have no disputes with anyone, as David *Hamelech* said (*Tehillim*, Ch. 120): “I am *Shalom*, but when I speak *they* are for war.” “I am *Shalom*” – by this David *Hamelech* was saying, “I am at peace with all human beings. But when I want to speak *they* all come out to war against me, for they simply cannot tolerate me. But as for me, I have no dispute with them at all.” And this is the way of the Tzaddikim. With them rests the trait of complete *Shalom* and they cling to the Supreme G-d whose name is *Shalom* and Who always desires to bless His people Israel with *Shalom*.

Just as one needs to increase *Shalom* in the world between people, one also needs to work on the attribute of *Shalom* within himself, by making *Shalom* between all character traits and everything one goes through in life. A person's sins cause strife and war within him, as it is written (*Tehillim*, Ch. 38): “There is no peace in my bones, because of my sin.” And the *yetzer hara* confuses a person's mind with cynical questions and doubts on the way Hashem runs the world because it is difficult for him to understand why he must go through what he has to go through in life. It is also hard for him to understand why the other person has it good while for him everything is upside down. And this causes his heart to contend with Hashem, G-d forbid, and from this come all troubles, as it is written (*Hoshea*, Ch. 10): “Their heart is divided, now shall they bear their guilt.” For as soon as one's heart is divided, sin begins. Wholeness or *shleimus* (from the word *Shalom*), however, means that one is not divided in his traits in the face of different situations he encounters in life; rather, whether in good times or the opposite, he will always find Hashem there, as David *Hamelech* said (*Tehillim*, Ch. 56): “With Hashem I will praise the matter, with *Elokim* I will praise the matter.” – Whether it is G-d's attribute of loving kindness (Hashem) that I perceive or whether His attribute of strict justice (*Elokim*), in both of them I will praise and exalt His blessed name, for I know that it is all from Him alone for the sake of my eternal benefit. And this very realization itself is a taste of the World to Come (*Lekutei Mohoran*, Part I, Lesson 4) as well as the essence of cleaving to Hashem Whose name is *Shalom*. For as soon as I know that

everything is with Divine Providence, I have *Shalom* with all of my traits, and there is no strife in my heart at all.

All of the peace that a person has with others flows from the peace that he has with Hashem, for as soon as he is at peace with Hashem and he knows that all that happens to him – including things dealt to him by others – is through Supernal Supervision, then he has peace with everyone and it is totally irrelevant for him to be bothered by them at all. However, when one is angry, hateful and argumentative with others, this is a sign that he is not at peace with Hashem. In truth, one type of *Shalom* depends on the other.

The work of Moshiach will be to bring the most wondrous *Shalom* into the world. Therefore, before the arrival of Moshiach, *Eliyahu HaNavi* will come, as our holy Sages have said (*Talmud Aydius*, Ch. 8): “Eliyahu comes neither to push away nor to bring close...but only to make *Shalom* in the world.” For through his making peace in the world, people will come together in unity and they will explain the truth to each other, and everyone will come to recognize Hashem, which is the true goal (*Lekutei Mohoran*, Part I, Lesson 27). Therefore, happy is the one who merits to acquire the trait of *Shalom* – *Shalom* in his entire being and among all of his character traits. This will cause him to be at peace with Hashem and with all of G-d’s creatures. And then he will have a good and sweet life in this world and get a taste of the World to Come in his lifetime. Happy is he and fortunate is his lot.

Mohorosh connected the above ideas to our parsha in the following way. We find in our parsha the very first war in the Torah, as it is written (*Bereishis*, Ch. 14): “They waged war against *Bera*, king of Sedom, *Birsha*, king of Amarah, *Shinav*, king of Admah, *Shemeiver*, king of Tzevoyim, and the king of Bela, which is Tzoar.” And Rashi explains as follows: “*Bera* (*be’ra* - ‘with evil’) means that he was evil to heaven and evil to mankind; *Birsha* (*b’resha* – ‘with wickedness’) – means that he rose to power through wickedness; *Shinav* (a combination of two words ‘*sonei* [to hate]’ and ‘*av* [father]’ – means that he hated his Father in heaven; *Shemeiver* (‘he set his wing’) – means that he flew and leaped against Hashem in rebellion.” Perhaps we can say that the holy Torah is hinting here to the above teachings of Rebbe Nachman, namely, what is the source and cause of the trait of war and strife and how we can guard ourselves against it?

The first war in the Torah was waged by *Bera*, King of Sedom, who was evil to heaven and evil to mankind, that is, he was angry with and had arguments

against Hashem, and automatically he was also angry with all of Hashem's creatures. So too, *Birsha* who rose to power through his wickedness and *Shinav* who hated his Father in heaven and *Shemever* who rebelled against Hashem – it all began because their hearts, i.e. their character traits, were divided towards Hashem, and this caused them to make war and commit wickedness against all mankind. The way to save ourselves from the trait of strife is only by drawing close to the Tzaddikim who are called “*Bris Shalom* (a covenant of peace)” (Bamidbar 25:12), which is an aspect of *Avraham Avinu* who was the head of all those who would ever be circumcised and the first to teach the knowledge of Hashem throughout the world. For the Tzaddikim bring the trait of *Shalom* to the world so that all people can have *Shalom* with Hashem, and automatically they will also have *Shalom* with one another. May Hashem help us to acquire the trait of *Shalom* in truth, and may we merit to see the revelation of Eliyahu *HaNavi* and the coming of our righteous Moshiach swiftly in our days. *Amen v'amen*.