

Friday Night, Parshas Mikaitz, Second Shabbos of Chanukah 5764

At the Friday night meal, Mohorosh Shlit"א spoke awesome and wondrous words based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman Z"ל in Lekutei Mohoran, part I, lesson 218, which discusses the concept of a person being spontaneously inspired to travel to a faraway place.

Mohorosh began: Rebbe Nachman says, “Know, that sometimes when a harsh decree has been decreed upon a person, G-d forbid, ‘even though he is not aware of it, his soul is aware of it (*Megillah* 3b)’. Sometimes there is a spontaneous urge to travel to some faraway place in order to hide oneself from the decree. And even though he does not know why he suddenly wants to travel, nevertheless, his soul knows why. This is where the inexplicable desire to journey to a certain place comes from. And sometimes, when he arrives at that place, his identity becomes publicized and he becomes famous. This fame can harm him very much, G-d forbid. In this way, a great Tzaddik passed away after suddenly getting the urge to travel to the Land of Israel. He himself was consciously aware of the spiritual process that prompted him to go away and hide himself. But on his way to Israel, he passed through a certain country, where people learned of his greatness and he became famous. Soon after, he passed away in that place. This happened very recently in our time, may Hashem save us. (These are the words of Rebbe Nachman.)”

Mohorosh explained that Rebbe Nachman revealed to us in this lesson why a person sometimes has a sudden desire to travel without a clear reason for doing so. And this is because he wants to hide himself from the Satan that wants to pursue and accuse him. He needs to take great care to remain inconspicuous throughout the entire journey. His presence must not become publicized as this could harm him greatly as happened in the case of the brilliant Tzaddik, Rabbi Naftali Katz (author of *Smichas Chachomim*), may his merit protect us. He wanted to go to the Land of Israel and on the way he had to pass through the city of Istanbul in Turkey. And there his greatness was discovered and his fame spread. He then passed away and was buried there. Rebbe Nachman, on his journey to the Land of Israel, passed through Istanbul and was at Rabbi Naftali’s grave on one *Erev Shabbos*. While he was at the gravesite, he fainted. Only with great difficulty did they succeed in

reviving him. Rebbe Nachman related afterward that if they hadn't tried to wake him up he would have died, because the great Tzaddik, Rabbi Naftali, said to Rebbe Nachman at the gravesite that he was very lonely there and he wanted Rebbe Nachman to be buried there next to him. Rebbe Nachman was in great danger of passing away there. But thanks to people reviving him, he was saved from death. And that which Rebbe Nachman mentions in this lesson, "and this happened very recently in our time", is a reference to Rabbi Leib Z"l, who was the father-in-law of Rabbi Yudel Z"l, a student of Rebbe Nachman's. Rabbi Leib was a very great Tzaddik and he wanted to go to the Land of Israel. When he was on the boat, a huge and very strange sea creature came and wanted to swallow the boat. He went up to the ship's mast and showed the sea creature the sign of the *Bris Kodesh* and the creature fled. From this it became publicized to everyone his great holiness, but it caused him to pass away there on the boat. They placed him on a plank of wood in the ocean, out of fear that the body would decompose, and the plank floated next to the boat the entire trip until it reached a certain island. And on that island they buried him with great honor. These are the two stories that Rebbe Nachman refers to in this lesson.

Rebbe Nachman reveals to us that through a person's hiding himself from others, and not desiring fame, he will be saved from the accusations of the Satan, and he can continue to serve Hashem in this life. This is an important idea for an upright person involved in serving Hashem – that he should not have the desire and the will to become famous, because this could harm him very much, G-d forbid. Rather, the important thing is to be involved in serving Hashem with simplicity and modesty. And if Hashem should want him to become famous, then against his will, he will become famous. But he will not strive for this himself and he will therefore be able to accomplish all he needs to do in order to fulfill his mission. Happy is he, and fortunate is his lot.

Mohorosh tied all of this to our weekly parsha in a most wondrous way as follows: We find regarding *Yaakov Avinu*, that he operated with the above advice and commanded his children to hide themselves as much as they could, as it is written (Bereishis, ch. 42), "And Yaakov saw that there was food to buy in Egypt. And Yaakov said to his children, 'Why do you act conspicuously and draw attention to yourselves?'" For Yaakov Avinu saw that they would need to journey to Egypt because there was food to buy there. The word for "food for sale" that is used in this verse is *shever*. The word *shever*, besides meaning "food that can be purchased", also means

expectation and hope. But Yaakov did not see clearly how and through what means the salvation from the famine and his pain would come about. This is exactly the concept discussed above – although he himself was not conscious of it, his soul knew that there was more than food to be bought in Egypt – there was great expectation and hope for salvation there. Therefore he said to his children, “why do you draw attention to yourselves?” That is, do not draw the attention of the children of Eisav and Yishmael as if you are fully satiated and not suffering from the famine. As *Rashi* states on this verse, that they should not appear conspicuous and strange to other people so that the *yetzer hara* should not stir up accusations against them. Therefore, he told them not to enter Egypt through a single gate, in order not to draw attention to themselves due to their beauty and greatness. And this attention would in turn cause the Evil Eye to harm them. As it is written (Bereishis 42:5), “The children of Israel came to buy food among the other people who came.” And *Rashi* explains that they hid and spread themselves out among the crowd in order not to be recognized. All of this was in order to hide and protect themselves from being harmed by spiritual accusations. And when they came before Yosef, he understood well that they needed to feel regret and to rectify the wrongs they did to him – how they wanted to kill him by throwing him into a pit full of snakes and scorpions and how they ended up selling him as a slave. And all of these wrongs came about because they envied and hated him. But Yosef wanted to show them the way to do *teshuva* – that although they envy and hate someone, it is forbidden to kill him or to leave him to die or to sell him into slavery. Therefore, he also utilized the above advice, i.e. to hide oneself and to comport oneself modestly as it is written (Bereishis 42:7), “He acted like a stranger to them and spoke harshly to them.” And he accused them of being spies, until they confessed to each other (Bereishis 42:21), “But we are guilty...” But this was still not enough. He then arranged the incident with the silver goblet until they returned and said to him (Bereishis, ch. 43), “What can we say to our master, what can we speak, how can we justify ourselves, G-d has found the sin of your servants, here we are slaves to our master...” in order to rectify their selling him as a slave, but at this point they still didn’t know he was Yosef. Therefore the main rectification finally came after the death of *Yaakov Avinu*, when they came before Yosef and flung themselves down before him (Bereishis, ch. 50): “And they said, we are now your slaves.” Then Yosef revealed to them the secret of *teshuva*, “And Yosef said to them, do not fear, am I in place of G-d? You thought to do evil to me, G-d meant it for good in order to save alive a great people.” That is, we have to know that every cause is from Hashem. He is the Cause of all causes. And we only have to give ourselves over completely to Him. In this way, Yosef

wanted to instill in them true knowledge: that it is forbidden to pursue any Jew, to hate him, and to leave him to perish. May Hashem help us merit to integrate into ourselves true love for our fellow Jews and we will thereby merit to unite with all Jewish souls until we merit to see the redemption of Israel speedily in our days. Amen and amen.