

Seuda Shlishis, Parshas Noach, 5765

At the third Shabbos meal, Mohorosh *Shlit"á* spoke inspiring words about the great importance of the attribute of "Shalom" (peace), based on *Lekutei Mohoran*, Part I, Lesson 27.

Rebbe Nachman says: "In order to draw the entire world to His service, to serve Him with one consent, and all people will throw away their idols of silver and gold and pray to Hashem alone – this matter can be accomplished in each and every generation in accordance with the level of "Shalom" that exists in the generation. For by virtue of "Shalom" that exists between human beings, they will be able to work together to investigate and explain the truth to each other. And in this way, everyone will throw away their false gods of silver and gold and bring themselves close to the truth." (These are the words of Rebbe Nachman.)

Mohorosh explained that the main goal of creation is that all people should merit to recognize Hashem, pray to Him and serve Him with one consent, as it is written (*Zaphania*, Ch. 3): "For then, I will transform the nations to a pure language so they will all call upon the name of Hashem, to serve Him with one consent", and then everyone will throw away their idols of silver and gold and recognize that these things possess no intrinsic importance at all. And they will realize that the main thing is to serve Hashem alone and to turn to Him for all of their needs, for all of the silver and gold in the world are in His hand alone, as it is written (*Haggai*, Ch. 2): "Mine is the silver and mine is the gold, says Hashem, Master of Legions."

But as long as people have not yet merited to recognize Hashem, they will end up making silver and gold into independent entities and into ends unto themselves. And they will then begin to covet and infringe upon the money and property of their fellow man, because it seems to them that money is the main goal of life. But stealing totally prevents a person from reaching the real goal which is accomplished only by virtue of "Shalom" that exists in the generation; "Shalom" makes it possible for everyone to speak with everyone else, and work together to

investigate and explain the true goal to each other, and thereby they will come to recognize Hashem.

But when there is strife between people, and especially when people are stealing from each other, then it is impossible for them to get together and explain the goal to each other, for everyone wants to swallow his fellow alive. And as soon as a person permits himself to steal from another, he thus makes himself fit to commit every sin, and there is no way to turn him back from his evil path (*Sefer HaMiddos*, Ch. Stealing #1). Likewise, Rebbe Nachman taught us that it is possible to extract a person from all types of lusts except for the lust for money (Rebbe Nachman's Stories, Story #12, The Master of Prayer).

When a person lusts for money and also permits himself to steal from his friend, it is almost impossible to pull him out of his error, let alone speak to him about the real goal of life. And this lust for money is a clear indication that he is a man who is badly blemished, because it is impossible for one to touch another's money unless one is badly blemished by the lust for sexual immorality. And this is what seduces him to covet the money of his fellow. Therefore, happy is the one who is involved in making "Shalom" among the people of his generation and who teaches them about the enormous blemish that comes from stealing another person's money. If there would be unity and Shalom in the generation, then people would be able to explain the truth to one another, and in the end they would come to serve Hashem with one consent, which is the ultimate goal in life.

Mohorosh connected these ideas to our parsha in the following way. We find in our parsha the tremendous blemish of the Generation of the Flood and how they corrupted their way upon the earth, as it is written (*Bereishis*, Ch. 6): "And the earth became corrupted before G-d, and the earth was filled with robbery." And Rashi explains that the word "*va'tishacheis* [וַתִּשְׁחַת]" (became corrupted)" refers to sexual immorality and idolatry (*Talmud Sanhedrin* 56b). Afterward it is written: "G-d said to Noah, the end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with robbery because of them." Rashi explains that their verdict was sealed only because of robbery and stealing.

We need to understand the reason why their verdict was sealed due to robbery and not because of sexual immorality and idolatry. We know that the punishment for the types of sexual sins the Generation of the Flood committed and for idolatry is more severe than the punishment for stealing and robbery. Immorality and idolatry are among the prohibitions for which we are commanded to give up our lives rather than transgress. But we are not commanded to give up our lives rather than transgress in regard to stealing, as stealing is a strict prohibition but not one of the three cardinal sins. Let's try to answer this question according to the words of Rebbe Nachman.

As long as there is no robbery and stealing in the world, even though there may be immorality and idolatry, it is still possible to communicate with people and to explain to them the true purpose of life, to bring them out from their errors and return them to the truth. But as soon as the blemish of robbery and stealing are found in the world and there is no "Shalom" among people, it becomes impossible for people to get together and explain to each other the true purpose of life and turn each other back from their errors. Therefore, the verdict of the Generation of the Flood was sealed because of robbery and stealing, since it had become impossible to remove them from their errors.

And this is what the Torah says about the Generation of Separation (*Bereishis*, Ch. 11:1): "And the entire earth was of one language and of one purpose." But in the end it is written (verse 9): "And from there Hashem scattered them all over the face of the earth." And Rashi asks on this verse: Which is worse, the sin of the Generation of the Flood or that of the Generation of Separation? The Generation of the Flood did not attempt to wage war against the belief in Hashem as the Generation of Separation did. But the Generation of the Flood were washed away whereas the Generation of Separation were not destroyed from the world. This is because the Generation of the Flood were thieves and there was strife among them, and this ultimately caused them to be destroyed. But the Generation of Separation treated each other with love and friendship, as it says: 'One language and one consent' and that

is what saved them. This teaches us that strife is detested and that Shalom is great and this is exactly what Rebbe Nachman is saying here.

The main blemish of the Generation of the Flood was due to the strife between them, for in such a state, it is impossible to reach the true goal. With regard to the Generation of Separation, however, who had one language and one goal and among whom Shalom rested, it was still possible to bring them to the truth. Therefore, they were not punished like the Generation of the Flood. But when Hashem saw that the unity among them caused a rebellion against Him - because there was no one who could explain the true goal of life to them - they were punished measure for measure and their Shalom was taken away as the verse says: “And Hashem dispersed them from there upon the face of the entire earth”, and in this way they were unable to bring their evil plan to fruition. May Hashem grant us a wondrous universal Shalom and may we grasp the desired goal of life, until we merit to see the rectification of the world, perfected under the Kingdom of Hashem, speedily in our days. *Amen v’amen.*