

Parshas Zos HaBracha and the Yahrtzeit of Rebbe Nachman

At the meal commemorating the *Yahrtzeit* of Rebbe Nachman on the second intermediate day of *Sukkos*, Mohorosh *Shlit"á* spoke inspiring words on the verse from *Parshas Zos HaBracha* (*Devarim*, Ch. 33): “And this is the blessing with which Moshe, the man of G-d, blessed the Children of Israel before his death.”

Mohorosh said: Perhaps we can say that hidden in this verse is a hint to the awesome nature of the passing of the true Tzaddikim - how even after their passing they remain with us in this world, as our holy Sages have said (*Talmud Berachos* 18b) on the verse (*Shmuel* II, Ch. 23): “‘And Benayahu the son of Yehoyada the son of a living man...’ – this teaches that the Tzaddikim in their death are called alive.” In fact, on the day of their death they ascend to a level much higher than they had ever reached during their life in this world. And on this day, they also receive mighty powers to bring down wondrous lights to all the souls of Israel and to bestow upon them an abundance of spiritual and material gifts.

The day of their passing is referred to as “*Yom Hilula*”, which is synonymous to a wedding day, for on the day of their passing they are busy unifying and binding themselves to the holy *Shechinah*, and they cause a great unification in all of the worlds. And on this day of their rejoicing they bestow gifts to all of the souls of Israel.

The passing of Tzaddikim is only from *our* worldly perception, i.e. the viewpoint of our eyes since we can no longer see the Tzaddik’s body, but the *neshama* and the light it gives off increases in power and intensity on the day of his passing and great spiritual and material bounty is bestowed upon the souls of Israel. And this is the secret of “And this (*zos*) is the blessing with which Moshe, the man of G-d, blessed” – “*zos*” refers to the revelation of the *Shechinah* and the illumination of holy *emunah* as it is brought in the *Tikkunei Zohar* (*Tikkun 6*): “One who desires to reach the King only has permission to reach him through the *Shechinah*. This is what is written (Jeremiah, Ch. 9): ‘Only with this (*b’zos*), shall he who glories take pride in understanding and knowing me.’ Aharon HaKohein only went into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur with this (*b’zos*) as it is written (*Vayikra*, Ch. 16): ‘With this (*b’zos*) shall Aharon come into the Holy.’ And Moshe blessed the

Children of Israel with this, as it is written (Devarim, Ch. 33): ‘And this (v’zos) is the blessing (V’zos ha’bracha).’ ” For the service of the Tzaddikim all the days of their lives is to completely bind themselves to holy *emunah* and to bring it down to all the souls of Israel, for everything depends on *emunah*, as Rebbe Nachman has said (*Sichos HaRan* #33): “By the world, *emunah* is a small thing, but by me the main thing is only *emunah*”, for everything is included in *emunah*. And the essential level of a person is measured according to his *emunah*. Moreover, the true Tzaddikim, after all of the lofty perceptions of G-dliness they have achieved always return to simple *emunah* in Hashem, as the holy Baal Shem Tov once said that after all of his lofty perceptions he always returns to praying like a small child - with simple *emunah*. Therefore, “And this (v’zos)” – *emunah* - is the *main* “blessing (ha’bracha)” with which the Tzaddikim bless Israel.

The word “the blessing (*ha’bracha*)” in this verse is written with two *hays* – one at the beginning of the word and one at the end, and they both allude to the two *hays* in Hashem’s four-letter name – *Yud-Kay-Vav-Kay*. The first *hay* of the Name corresponds to the *sefira* of *Bina* (the faculty of understanding) and the final *hay* to the *sefira* of *Malchus* (Kingship), as is known in Kabbalah (*Kisvay H’arizal - Shaar Eser Sefirot*). For the main blessing of *emunah* is when it brings a person to deep reflection and contemplation of the loving kindnesses of Hashem, to meditate upon all of the details of one’s life and how Hashem does unearned kindnesses with a person at every moment. This is the first *hay* of Hashem’s four-letter name, which alludes to the *sefira* of *Bina*.

After a person has attained this level of understanding, i.e. *Bina*, he then needs to bring the *Bina* down into *Malchus*, and *Malchus* is speech - the final *hay* of Hashem’s four-letter name. Now he will praise and glorify His blessed name for all of the unearned kindnesses Hashem does with him at every moment, because it is not enough for *Bina* to remain only in the heart, but it must also be brought down into *Malchus* – into speech - to bring out of one’s mouth words of praise and thanks to Hashem for all of His kindness and compassion. So we find that the blessing of *emunah* that is hinted to in the word “zos” is itself the complete blessing when it includes the two *hays* – *Bina* and *Malchus*. And when a person has combined these two *hays* in his life, this is the sign that the blessing of *emunah* is truly resting upon him.

It is brought in the *Midrash* (*Devarim Rabbah* 11:4) on the words “Moshe, the man of G-d” in the verse “With which *Moshe, the man of G-d*, blessed”:

“Moshe, from his middle down, a man; and from his middle up, *Elokim*” This teaches us that the main completeness of the Tzaddik is that he can be above and below at the same time (*Lekutei Mohoran*, Part II, Lesson 68), to bind the upper worlds with the lower worlds – spirituality with physicality.

The Tzaddik is bound above through his lofty perceptions of the upper worlds, but he also brings himself down to all the simple people and he listens to their needs and helps them in every matter. And this is what is said about Moshe *Rebbeinu* (*Shemos*, Ch. 19): “And Moshe went down from the mountain unto the people” – which means he was able to bring himself from the highest perceptions of the upper worlds down to the simplest people. And in this way, he tied the upper worlds to the lower worlds, for he revealed how a person can find Hashem’s G-dliness in everything in this world and within all physical activities because there is no absolute existence at all besides Hashem. And he revealed to them that Hashem created this world in order for us to serve Him from within the physicality of the world; that we should eat, drink and sleep and elevate all of the smallest levels to the service of Hashem. And in this way, the Tzaddik connects the upper worlds with the lower worlds and teaches us how we can do the same.

The service of the Tzaddik also entails revealing to those who are on very high spiritual levels and those who *think* they have already reached very lofty perceptions and understandings of G-dliness that they have still grasped nothing, for “His greatness is beyond investigation (*Tehillim*, Ch. 145)”. On the other hand, those who inhabit much lower levels and those who think they are very far from Hashem, to them the Tzaddik reveals that Hashem is very close to them and that there is no absolute existence at all besides Hashem (*Lekutei Mohoran*, Part II, Lesson 7). Therefore, the true Tzaddik is called “A man of G-d (*Ish HaElokim*)”, for he ties together the aspect of “*Ish* (man)” which encompasses all physical matters, to the aspect of “*Elokim* (G-d)” which includes all spiritual matters and he can teach those who are very high and those who are very low the knowledge of G-dliness that each one needs in order to reach his maximum potential.

And this is the verse “the Children of Israel before his death” – for the passing of Moshe *Rebbeinu* was only from *our* worldly perception, that is, from the point of view of physicality, but from the spiritual perspective he is alive and enduring forever and he stands and serves in the heights as he did during his lifetime in this world. And he brings Torah and comprehensions of G-dliness down to the souls of Israel and teaches them how to find Hashem’s G-dliness

within all of the materiality of this world. Therefore, *now* as before his death, he is always standing and blessing - “And this is the blessing with which Moshe, the man of G-d, blessed the Children of Israel **before** his death”, as though today was still before his death, as though the concept of death did not really apply to him, for each and every day the souls of Israel learn the Torah of Moshe and they say, “Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying” and “Hashem said to Moshe, saying”, as though he were alive in this world today. And all of this is included in the blessing of “**And this is the bracha** (*V'zos ha'bracha*) with which Moshe blessed” - which is the blessing of *emunah* as mentioned before.

And an essential part of *emunah* is *emunas chochamim*, because without *emunas chochamim* it is impossible to attain complete *emunah* in Hashem, as it is brought in the *Midrash (Mechilta Parshas Beshalach)* on the verse (*Shemos*, Ch. 14): “‘They believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant’ – Whoever believes in the Shepherd of Israel [Moshe], the Torah considers it as though he believes in the One Who spoke and the world came to be.” Therefore, through learning and remembering the Torah of Moshe *Rebbeinu* always, as it is written (*Malachi*, Ch. 3): “Remember the Torah of Moshe, My servant”, Moshe *Rebbeinu* lives and endures with us, which is an aspect of “before his death”, i.e. before he left this world. And each time we learn the Torah of Moshe, we receive his blessing anew – the blessing of *emunah* - which includes within it all of the blessings, as it is written (*Mishlei*, Ch. 28): “A man of faith [shall have], abundant blessings.”

And all of these blessings are revealed to an even greater extent on the Tzaddik's *yahrtzeit*, for on the day of his passing he ascends higher and higher, reaching new and loftier perceptions that he had never before attained. And he brings down from there new revelations to all the souls of Israel and he gives out precious blessings and gifts to them. This is the great importance of Rebbe Nachman's *yahrtzeit* that we are celebrating today on the fourth day of *Sukkos*. For anyone who learns the books of Rebbe Nachman and fulfills his advice, Rebbe Nachman is actually alive and enduring with him, and he receives new vitality and encouragement from Rebbe Nachman every time he learns his books, as when Rebbe Nachman was alive in this world, and how much more so on his *yahrtzeit* when he brings down to the souls of Israel *completely new lights*.

What is the inner connection between Rebbe Nachman's *yahrtzeit*, the festival of *Sukkos* and the fact that his *yahrtzeit* is on the day on which the *ushpizin* is

Moshe *Rebbeinu*? The main idea of the *sukkah* has to do with binding spirituality and physicality together. And this was the service of Moshe *Rebbeinu* all the days of his life, as mentioned before. For the essence of the mitzvah of *sukkah* is to eat, drink and sleep within the *sukkah*, to bring all of the physical acts of service beneath the shadow of the *sukkah* – which is also called the shadow of *emunah* (Zohar Emor 103a) – in order to reveal that there is G-dliness within all of these physical activities. Therefore, the word “*sukkah*” has the same *gematria* as the sum of the two divine names *Yud-Kay-Vav-Kay* and *Ado-ai*, and this shows the connection between spirituality and physicality as follows: *Yud-Kay-Vav-Kay* represents the spiritual revelations of Hashem’s G-dliness on all of the higher levels and *Ado-ai* is the indwelling of the *Shechinah* in the lower worlds and in all things material. For through the *sukkah* we reveal that “His kingship rules over everything (*Tehillim*, Ch. 103)”, and that there is no absolute existence at all other than Hashem. And this was the service of Moshe *Rebbeinu* all the days of his life as well as after his death. And this is the same thing that Rebbe Nachman wants to plant in us - and that is to recognize Hashem from each and every detail of all the days of our lives.

And how fortunate is the one who merits to bring himself close to Rebbe Nachman in truth and to follow all of his holy advice, for then he will get a glimpse of eternity in his lifetime and taste some of the hidden light that will be revealed in the time to come. May Hashem help us merit to be close to Rebbe Nachman in truth, to internalize all of his wondrous teachings until we merit to see the light of the Redemption and to sit within the *sukkah* of the skin of the *Livyasan* swiftly in our days. *Amen v’amen*.