

Friday Night, Parshas Vayera, 5767

Friday night at the first Shabbos meal, Mohorosh *Shlit"á* spoke inspiring words about the purpose of creation, based on *Lekutei Mohoran*, Part II, Lesson 39.

Rebbe Nachman says: “That which our Sages of blessed memory have said (*Talmud Eirubin* 13b): ‘It is better for a person not to have been created than to have been created’ and likewise what is written (*Koheles*, Ch. 4): ‘[So I praised the dead that are already dead more than the living that are yet alive;] but better than both of them is he who has not yet been, [who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.]’ – this matter is astonishing, for if it is so, then for what purpose was man created? But it is certain that these words were only said regarding this world; that according to the troubles of this world and the afflictions that people suffer in this world, certainly it would have been better had man not been created at all. However, with regard to the world to come, it is surely better that he was created, for it is precisely by going through this world that he will arrive at his goal and so have our Sages said (*Avos* Ch. 4) “more beautiful is one hour of *teshuvah* and good deeds in this world, than all of the life of the world to come.” (These are the words of Rebbe Nachman.)

Mohorosh explained that the main goal of life is that a person should strive towards cleaving to Hashem to the point that he sees nothing before his eyes but the truth of Hashem’s existence in every detail of creation. And then, the tremendous beauty and splendor of all of creation will be revealed to him. Who can fathom the greatness of Hashem that exists in the creatures of this world and all the more so in the other worlds which contain myriads of exceedingly awesome and wondrous things? And they were all created only for the sake of Israel, that they would recognize the truth of Hashem’s existence through each and every detail of creation and thereby bring themselves and the entire world to the true goal.

Therefore, the way man comes to perfection is precisely by passing through this world. And from all of the details of creation he should meditate on the great acts of the Creator and thereby be inspired to serve Him. But in the life

of this world people go through various troubles and afflictions and therefore, man is in great danger of having his heart become completely broken and of giving up hope of ever reaching his goal. Moreover, mighty obstacles and impediments are placed before him – obstacles which are actually filled with Hashem's Glory. But it is all done for the sake of giving man free choice and to test him: What will he do in a time of trouble – will he run *away* from Hashem, G-d forbid, because of his troubles or will he do the opposite and run *to* Him because of his troubles and thereby convert all of them into a powerful attachment to Hashem when he understands well that Hashem is calling to him from within everything he is going through. And he continuously comes to Hashem with prayers and supplications that He should have compassion on him and bring him close to serving Him truly and sincerely. And then he will merit to see Hashem's salvation and how all of the troubles and afflictions came only to purify him, to cause his spiritual essence to overpower his physicality and to attach his soul to Him. And then he will bless and praise His blessed Name for all of it, as it is written (*Tehillim*, Ch.118): "I will thank You because you have afflicted me and it became a salvation for me." And he will merit to truly arrive at his goal.

Therefore, that which our holy Sages have said (*Talmud Eiruvim* 13b): "It is better for a person not to have been created than to have been created", was only said in regard to the physicality and materiality of this world, i.e. with respect to the troubles and afflictions that people suffer in this world it would have been better if man would not have been created at all; but in relation to the life of the world to come – the life of the spirit – the cleaving to the Creator that one merits precisely through being in this world and through overcoming all of the obstacles and all of the troubles and afflictions – for this, it is certainly better that he was created, for it is only in this way that we come to the goal and merit all of the goodness of all the worlds. And Reb Nosson explains (*Lekutei Halachos, Kibud Av v'Em, halacha 5*) that precisely this is the foundation of the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Em* (honoring one's father and mother).

At first glance it is difficult to understand if it is better for a person not to have been created, then why must he honor his father and mother who brought him into this world – a place which is simply not worth coming to? But since our Sages said this only with respect to the life of this world, but with respect to the life of the world to come it is certainly better that we were created (as it is only through this world that we can reach the goal of life in the world to come), therefore, we certainly need to honor our parents who

brought us to this world which is the place where we merit to reach the life of the world to come. Therefore, happy is the one who merits to strengthen himself greatly in whatever he goes through in life and to fix his sights only on the ultimate goal – on cleaving to the blessed Creator. And in this way, he will merit to live the life of the world to come in this world. 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 episode of *Akeidas Yitzchak* (the Binding of Yitzchak), and how our father Yitzchak was ready to be sacrificed for the sanctification of Hashem's Name. We need to understand why the *Akeida* is always called by the name of Yitzchak – *Akeidas Yitzchak* – and never by the name of Avraham Avinu – *Akeidas Avraham*? Certainly, Avraham Avinu's test was exceedingly great and awesome, no less than the test of Yitzchak Avinu. In his love for Hashem, Avraham Avinu went to sacrifice his only son who was given to him after 100 years of life. So why do we always refer to the *Akeida* by the name of Yitzchak?

If we look deeply into the matter, we will see that Yitzchak Avinu's test in the *Akeida* with regard to the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Em* was extremely awesome and terrifying. His father was very old - a man of 137 - and he was just 37. It would have been very easy to escape and run away from his father rather than give himself over to be slaughtered. Not only did he not do this, but he even asked his father to tie him up very tightly so that he shouldn't be able to move and invalidate himself as an offering. So we see that Yitzchak's *Kibud Av v'Em* was truly mind-blowing – he nullified himself before his father to the utmost degree and had perfect faith in his father's words that Hashem told him to sacrifice his son. Therefore, the *Akeida* is certainly called by his name, for Yitzchak attained a very lofty and awesome level in the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Em*.

And so it is brought in the Zohar (*Vayeira* 103a): “What is the [ultimate] case of a son who honors his father? - This is Yitzchak and Avraham. And when was this? - When he bound him upon the altar and wanted to bring him as an offering. Yitzchak was 37 and Avraham was very old. And if he would have kicked him with one foot, [Avraham] would have been unable to stand before him. But he honored his father and was bound before him like a lone sheep. It was all in order to do the will of his father [Avraham].” So we see that Yitzchak Avinu fulfilled the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Em* to the utmost degree, for he understood the purpose of the life of this world - that it is all for the

sake of the life of the world to come. And his merit endures for all the souls of Israel for all generations. Yitzchak Avinu's self-sacrifice at the *Akeida* and his total devotion to fulfilling the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Em* will stand up for all the souls of Israel to atone for their misdeeds and to redeem them from all of their troubles. May Hashem help us to fulfill the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Em* in the proper way and to reach a clear recognition of the goal so that we will be attached to Him forever. *Amen v'amen*.

Seudas Bris Milah, Parshas Vayera, 5767

On Thursday of Parshas *Vayera* 5767, there was a *Bris Mila* in the *Beis Medrash* of Mohorosh, may his light shine. At the meal celebrating the *Bris*, Mohorosh *Shlit"l* spoke inspiring words on matters pertaining to *Bris Mila*.

We say in the liturgical poem sung at a *Bris Mila* "*Yom L'Yabasha*", which was composed by Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, one the greatest of all religious poets, in the days of *Mahari Ibn Migash*, the teacher of the Rambam, and these words were surely said with *ruach hakodesh*: "Those who come with You with the covenant of Your seal and from the womb they are circumcised for Your name. Show their sign to all who see them, and on the corners of their garments they will make fringes." We need to understand the connection between the words "Those who come with You with the covenant of Your seal" – which is speaking about *Bris Mila* and the words "And on the corners of their garments they will make fringes" – which refers to the mitzvah of *tzitzis*.

According to the words of Rebbe Nachman (*Lekutei Mohoran*, Part I, Lesson 7), *tzitzis* are a protection against sexual immorality. And it is explained in the *Tikunim* (*Tikun 18*) on the verse (*Bereishis*, Ch. 9) "And Shem and Yafes took the garment -- and they placed it on both their shoulders" that this garment alludes to the garment of *tzitzis*. The *Tikun* continues: "And the nakedness of their father they did not see' – for *tzitzis* covers nakedness." So too, our holy Sages have said (see Rashi on *Breishis* 9:23) that in the merit of Shem taking the initiative in covering his father's nakedness with the garment, Shem's children merited a *tallis* of *tzitzis*. And we also find in the Talmud (Tractate *Menachos* 44a) that the mitzvah of *tzitzis* saves a person from sin as it occurred to someone who was about to commit an act of

immorality that his tzitzis came and “slapped” him in the face. In this way he is prevented from committing a sin, for the power of the mitzvah of *tzitzis* shines the light of Hashem’s G-dliness upon a person as it is written (*Bamidbar*, Ch.15) regarding *tzitzis*: “You shall see it.” And our holy Sages have explained (Talmud *Yerushalmi* Brachos 7b) that the word “it” in this verse refers to the *Shechinah*. And as soon as a person draws the light of the *Shechinah* upon himself, he is saved from the lust of sexual immorality and protected from sin. And a revelation of the *Shechinah* is a sign of *Shmiras HaBris* (Guarding of the Bris). The holiness of the *Bris* is truly the root of a Jew’s cleaving to Hashem.

According to the above explanation, we can now understand the connection between the words of the poem. “Those who come with You with the covenant of Your seal”. Who are those that come with You and are attached to You in truth? These are the ones who come with the covenant of Your seal, i.e. those who fulfill the mitzvah of *Bris Mila* and guard the *Bris* truly and sincerely.

The people of Israel are so holy that they rejoice and yearn to fulfill the mitzvah of *Bris Mila* to the extent that “from the womb they are circumcised for Your name” – even when the child is still in his mother’s womb the parents are already yearning and longing to fulfill the mitzvah of *Bris Mila* with the son who will be born to them. And how can we know that we are holding by the sanctity of the *Bris* in truth? On this the poet answers: “Show their sign to all who see them” – That is, what is the sign that we can show to the world that we are truly Guarding the *Bris* and that we yearn to be holy and pure with the true sanctity of the *Bris*? – The sign is: “And on the corners of their garments they will make fringes” – We fulfill the mitzvah of *tzitzis* with great joy and openly walk with *tzitzis* for all to see. In this way, everybody sees the Jew’s longing and desire to merit the holiness of the *Bris*, for “the *tzitzis* cover nakedness”, as mentioned before. And especially when we also merit to actually take part in a *Bris Mila* and to enjoy the festive meal that takes place afterwards. Our holy Sages have said (*Midrash*, See *Sefer Bnai Yissaschar: Tishrei* 4:7) that Hashem promised Eliyahu *HaNavi* that He would atone for all those who participate in a *Bris* so they would be holy and pure at that special time. May Hashem help us merit true holiness and purity and we will fulfill the mitzvos of Hashem with joy always, until we merit to see the redemption and salvation of Israel swiftly in our days. *Amen v’amen*.