

Friday Night, Parshas Vaeschanan 5768

At the first meal, Mohorosh *Shlit"a* spoke inspiring words regarding the verse “*Vaeschanan* (I entreated) with G-d at that time, saying” (*Devarim* 3:23), based on the words of Rebbe Nachman in *Lekutei Mohoran* I, lesson 99.

Rebbe Nachman says, “A person should pray with great *devekus* (cleaving) to G-d. yet if upon occasion it happens that he cannot pray with *devekus*, he should not say, ‘I just won’t pray’; since he is unable to pray with appropriate concentration and *devekus*, and the prayer may not be accepted. This is as our Sages, of blessed memory, taught about Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa (*Berachos* 34b), that he would pray for the sick saying: ‘This one will live and this one will die.’ They said to him, ‘How do you know this?’ and he answered them, ‘If my prayer is fluent in my mouth, I know that it has been accepted. But if it is not, then it has been torn up’. This is in line with what we have said: With *devekus*, his prayer is then fluent in his mouth and accepted. But without it, G-d forbid, it is the reverse. Even so, a person should never say, ‘I just won’t pray’. Rather, he should always pray. And if he is unable to pray with appropriate *devekus*, let him pray with all his might. For at a later time, when he prays with appropriate *devekus*, all the prayers will ascend together with the prayer that he prayed properly. This is: “**I entreated with G-d**” – *Always*, with or without *devekus*. “**At that time, saying**” – In other words, at the time I merit to pray with *devekus*, which is the aspect of ‘my prayer is fluent in my mouth.’ This is the meaning of ‘at that time, saying’ – the words utter forth and are fluent in his mouth because he prays with *devekus*. As a result, all the prayers that he prayed until now ascend.” (These are the words of Rebbe Nachman).

Mohorosh explained that the knowledge that every single movement one does in honor of Hashem – even if he doesn’t have the proper *devekus* (joining/cleaving) or concentration – is very precious in Hashem’s eyes, needs to be ingrained within every person so that one can make the best of his actions. Each and every movement of a Jew is very important indeed, and Hashem takes pride in him. Even something as simple as a slight movement of his sidelock is very precious in His eyes and He receives great pride from this (*Likutei Mohoran* part I, lesson 17). This is because a Jew has a holy soul which is a portion of his G-d above, and with his actions he binds all of the upper worlds. Therefore, all of his movements create great things above, as Rebbe Nachman once said (while moving his hands), regarding the unique greatness of man, – (*Chayei Mohoran* #504) “When a man goes like *this* with his hands, a movement like *this* takes place in all the worlds. And when he goes like *that* with his hands, a movement like *that* takes place in all the worlds.”

Therefore, it is forbidden to say “I won’t pray because I don’t have the proper *devekus* or concentration”. Rather, he should always pray – with or without proper concentration – and believe that even the prayer without proper concentration is doing great things above. The proof of this is that at the moment when he merits praying with the proper *devekus*, all of the former prayers which he prayed are joined and elevated with the single prayer which he merited to pray properly and great things are accomplished with these prayers. If so, no prayer devoid of *devekus* was discarded; rather it had to remain and wait for a proper prayer to elevate it and then all are elevated retroactively. Since he strengthened him to pray, even without proper *devekus*, this eventually helped to pray properly, and from all his prayers together, a beautiful crown for Hashem was made.

Now, from where does the fatigue and lack of desire to pray with *devekus* come from? – From lack of *emunah* and faith in oneself. When one doesn’t believe that all of his movements are important and precious in Hashem’s eyes – this causes one to be slack in prayer. As Rebbe Nachman said (*Likutei Mohoran* part I, lesson 61) “There are those who are subject to dispute because they lack faith in themselves – they do not believe that G-d takes great delight in the Torah insights which they originate. And because have lack faith in their insights, they are negligent in creating them”. So too, is true in regards to prayer. When one lacks faith in the power of his prayers, it causes him to pray without devotion. Believing in oneself is also a portion of *emunah* in Hashem. One must believe he has the capability of reaching great heights in the service of Hashem and that Hashem has great pleasure and pride from him. This is because a Jew has a soul which is a portion of his G-d above as it is written (*Devarim* 32:9) “For the portion of G-d is His people, Yaakov the portion of His inheritance”. If he does not properly believe in himself, it’s as if his faith in Hashem has been diminished; as Rebbe Nachman explains (*Likutei Mohoran* part II, lesson 86) “There are many aspects of diminished faith. There are even *Tzaddikim* whose faith has diminished, as our sages of blessed memory said (*Sotah* 48b) ‘What is the cause of the tables of the righteous to be despoiled in the world to come?’ The smallness of faith which was in them – i.e. they did not believe in themselves”. A person needs to have much faith in himself and to believe that each and every one of his movements is very precious in Hashem’s eyes – whether they are done with the proper concentration or not. And when he has this faith, he will surely merit reaching great levels and cleaving to Hashem in truth. Happy is he and fortunate is his lot.

Mohorosh also explained that Rebbe Nachman’s words are also applicable to other things. For instance, if Rebbe Nachman said that we need to pray regardless of whether or not we have the proper concentration, then this can also be applied to

Torah study and fulfilling of *mitzvos*. We should study *Torah* and fulfill *mitzvos* regardless of whether we feel the proper *devekus* or concentration. When the proper *devekus* comes, all of the *Torah* study and *mitzvos* which we fulfilled will be elevated retroactively, thereby creating a crown for Hashem through them. This is the "System of Learning" which Rebbe Nachman instructed us about (See *Sichos HaRan* #76). Rebbe Nachman said that a person should study each book of the *Torah* in order, page after page, even if he doesn't properly understand what he's learning. Even though his learning is currently "without *devekus*" – he should continue reading the words in order and understanding will eventually come on its own. Quantity of learning outweighs all else. Understanding the *Torah* – "studying with *devekus*" – will come through repetition and then everything learned till that point, even what he didn't understand at first, will be elevated retroactively. Specifically through this consistent *Torah* study – even when he didn't understand or did not have the proper concentration – will lead him to proper *Torah* understanding and he'll merit being an expert in the entire *Torah*. Fortunate is he.

The same applies to fulfilling *mitzvos*. They should be performed according to one's capabilities, whether with the proper *devekus* or not, believing with simple faith that surely Hashem has great pleasure from all of his deeds. He should bear in mind that everything he does is only due to Hashem giving him the strength to do so and through this, he will merit coming to a great *devekus* and being attached to Him completely.

Rebbe Nachman en clothed all this in the verse (Devarim 3:23) "*Vaeschanan* (I entreated) with G-d at that time, saying..." "I entreated Hashem" **always**, whether with the proper frame of mind or not; because "*Vaeschanan*" means requesting as a free gift (*chinam*), as Rashi explains on this verse. At the time that a person does not have *devekus*, he doesn't have on what to base his request except as a free gift. However, when "at that time, saying" – that is, at the time when he will have words and they will flow fluently from his lips due to his great *devekus*, at that time all of his prayers which he prayed until now will be elevated retroactively. So too will be likewise with all of the *Torah* which he learned and the *mitzvos* which he performed. Not a single one was for naught; for they are all very important and precious in Hashem's eyes. And may Hashem grant us the merit of being very strong and persistent in His service in order to come to a great level of *devekus* until we are elevated and included in Him, from now and forever. *Amen v'amen*.